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Kejri to resign as CM in 2 days, give 'agnipariksha'

BJP terms it 'PR exercise', INDIA bloc welcomes his honesty

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday announced that he would resign after two days and sought early polls in the national capital while vowing not to sit in CM's chair till people give him a "certificate of honesty".

BJP hit back at the AAP supremo, terming his move a "PR exercise" and a "drama".

Kejriwal, released on bail from Tihar on Friday in the excise policy graft case, said the name of the next chief minister will be decided in a meeting of the party MLAs.

AAP National Convener, who reached the party headquarters here on Sunday along with his wife Sunita to address party workers, said he would become Chief Minister and Manish Sisodia deputy CM "only when people say we are honest". Sisodia got bail in the excise policy case last month.

"Delhi elections are due in February but I demand that the elections in the national capital be held in November along with Maharashtra... I will only sit on CM's chair after people give me a certificate of honesty. Want to give 'agnipariksha' (trial by fire) after coming out of jail," Kejriwal said.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal with other leaders waves during a party workers' meeting, in New Delhi, on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

Alleging BJP tried to prove him corrupt, Kejriwal claimed the saffron party could not provide good schools and free electricity to people because they were corrupt. "We are honest," he said.

Slamming Kejriwal over his resignation announcement, BJP National Spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said, "The AAP national convenor's announcement is a part of his plan to make his wife Sunita Kejriwal chief minister... Arvind Kejriwal has done a PhD on how to make a virtue out of necessity." He alleged that Kejriwal is enacting the resignation "drama" because the court did not acquit him in the (excise policy scam) case and instead granted him a conditional bail that turned him into a "ceremonial minister from the chief minister". *—PTI*

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> **AAP national convenor's announcement is a part of his plan to make his wife Sunita Kejriwal chief minister. He has done a PhD on how to make a virtue out of necessity**
>
> -Shehzad Poonawalla, BJP Spokesperson

SETBACK FOR ANIL VIJ

Saini is BJP's CM face in Haryana, asserts Pradhan

CHANDIGARH, 15 SEPT

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini is BJP's CM face and the party will score a hattrick of wins in the state under his leadership, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan asserted on Sunday after its senior leader Anil Vij said he will stake claim for the CM's post if the party returns to power after 5 October assembly polls.

Earlier, Vij, who is a six-time MLA and former minister, said he would stake a claim for the CM's post due to his seniority, and the party will take a call.

"I never sought anything from the party till today... people from Haryana are coming to meet me. Even in Ambala, people tell me that I am the senior-most, so why did I not become the CM. On the people's demand and on the basis of seniority, this time I will stake claim to become chief minister," he said.

PHOTO: PTI

When pointed out that Saini has already been declared the chief ministerial candidate, 71-year-old Vij told PTI, "There is no bar on staking the claim. I will make my claim, let the party take a call."

Vij was dropped from the Haryana Cabinet after Saini was sworn in as chief minister in March this year, replacing Manohar Lal Khattar. *—PTI*

Ch'garh: 5 killed on 'witchcraft suspicion', 5 held

SUKMA, 15 SEPT

Five members of a family, including two couples, were allegedly beaten to death on suspicion of practising witchcraft in a village in Chhattisgarh's tribal-dominated Sukma district on Sunday, police said. Five people, all from the same village, have been arrested for their alleged involvement in the murder and there might be more arrests, he said. After being alerted, senior officials rushed to the spot, he said. So far, five accused identified as Savlam Rajesh, 21, Savlam Hidma, Karam Satyam, 35, Kunjam Mukesh, 28 and Podiam Enka have been arrested, he said. The accused brutally attacked the victims with sticks leading to their death on the spot, he said. More arrests might be made, the official said. According to official sources, for the last few months, a child or a man was dying almost every week in the village and the residents blamed the victims' family for the deaths. The residents told police that they believed the victims' family used witchcraft to target those who became economically sound in their village, they said. Except for two children, the other five members of the family have been murdered by the accused, they said. In a similar incident on 12 September, four members of a family, including an infant boy, were allegedly killed on the suspicion that a member of their family practised black magic in a village in the state's Balodabazar-Bhatapara district. *—PTI*

Security breach at CM Siddaramaiah's event in Bengaluru

BENGALURU, 15 SEPT

An unidentified man suddenly tried to approach Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who was on the stage at an event here on Sunday and the security staff immediately whisked him away from the spot.

In the video, a man with a shawl in his hand, can be seen suddenly jumping onto the stage where Siddaramaiah was seated along with other dignitaries during the 'International Day of Democracy' event in front of Vidhana Soudha, the seat of state legislature and Secretariat here.

The person wearing a red and yellow Kannada flag-like scarf, manages to throw a shawl towards the CM, who was looking at the developments unfolding with surprise, and the security staff whisks him away.

According to police sources, the person who is said to be from Kanakapura was detained for questioning.

They said he was apparently approaching the CM to present him the shawl, and threw it towards Siddaramaiah. The police grabbed him and whisked him away from the spot. *—PTI*

An unidentified man approaches Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah during an event, in Bengaluru on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

'LONGEST' HUMAN CHAIN

Students dressed as BR Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi take part in a historic 2,500km-long human chain covering 31 districts from Bidar to Chamarajanagar, as a symbol of equality and fraternity to mark 'International Democracy Day'. Here is a glimpse from Bengaluru on Sunday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD** **>>>More on Page 2**

Yemen missiles land in central Israel

JEUSALEM, 15 SEPT

A missile fired from Yemen landed in an open area in central Israel early Sunday, the Israeli military said, in the latest reverberation from the nearly yearlong war in Gaza.

Nasruddin Amer, the deputy head of the media office for Yemen's Houthi rebels, says in a post on X that a missile fired from Yemen reached Israel after "20 missiles failed to intercept" it, describing the attack as the "beginning." The early morning attack triggered air raid sirens, including at Israel's international airport, where local media aired footage of people racing to shelters. There were no reports of casualties or damage, and the airport authority said operations resumed as normal shortly thereafter. *—AP*

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CBI GETS CUSTODY OF RG KAR'S GHOSH TILL 17 SEPT

KOLKATA, 15 SEPT

A local court here on Sunday sent former principal of RG Kar hospital Sandip Ghosh and Tala police station officer-in-charge Abhijit Mondal to CBI custody till 17 September, an officer said.

Both Ghosh and Mondal were produced before a court here by the central agency in connection with the rape-murder of a doctor at the State-run hospital.

The CBI, probing the case, had on Saturday evening arrested Mondal and added charges of evidence tampering against Ghosh, who is currently in judicial custody in a corruption case related to the RG Kar hospital.

The police officer was held after he "failed to provide satisfying answers" during questioning by the CBI officers. The CBI claimed in court that "there could be a bigger conspiracy" and that both Ghosh and Mondal had played some "vital roles" in this crime. The two were in touch with each other, and the former issued instructions to the policeman on how to proceed with the rape-murder case.

Mondal was informed about the death of the doctor around 10 am on 9 August, but the FIR was lodged around 11 pm,.

The CBI arrested Ghosh on 2 September in connection with financial irregularities at the hospital. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

IN CURRENT TENURE

NDA to fulfil 'One Nation, One Election'

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

BJP-led NDA government will implement 'one nation, one election' within its current tenure, sources said, exuding confidence that the reform measure would receive support across party lines.

As the third term of the NDA government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi completes 100 days in office, the sources said that the cohesion within the ruling alliance will continue for the rest of the tenure.

"Definitely, it will be implemented in this tenure itself. It will be a reality," one source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

In his Independence Day address last month, the prime minister made a strong pitch for 'one nation, one election', contending that frequent polls were creating hurdles in the country's progress.

"The nation has to come forward for 'one nation, one election'," Modi had said in his address from the ramparts of the Red Fort.

'One nation, one election' is one of the key promises made by the BJP in its manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections.

A high-level panel headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind in March this year recommended simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and state assemblies as the first step followed by synchronised local body polls within 100 days.

Separately, the Law Commission is likely to recommend holding simultaneous polls for all three tiers of government -- Lok Sabha, state assemblies and local bodies like municipalities and panchayats -- starting with 2029 and a provision for unity government in cases like hung house or no-confidence motion. The Kovind panel has not specified any period for rolling out simultaneous polls. *—PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a public meeting, in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand, Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

Science & tech priority during 100 days of Modi 3.0

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Central government, also known as Modi 3.0, has prioritised significant advancements in science, technology, energy, and security to meet national needs and position India as a competitive economy. In its first 100 days, the Modi 3.0 government has launched projects worth around Rs 15 lakh crore. These include key developments in sectors of science, technology, and security. Key initiatives include the establishment of an Rs 1,000 crore venture capital fund for space startups, the successful launch of the EOS-08 satellite aboard SSLV-D3 on 16 August, the creation of National Research Fund with an allocation of Rs 50,000 crore. *—ANI*

>>>More on Page 3

IndiGo's Doha flight faces tech issue; flyers wait long

MUMBAI, 15 SEPT

Passengers of an IndiGo flight from the city to Doha waited inside the aircraft for more than four hours as the flight was delayed due to a technical issue on Sunday.

Some passengers took to social media to complain about the long flight delay and that they had to wait for long. The flight was to take off on Sunday early morning.

Passengers were inside the aircraft for more than four hours before they deplaned.

The flight is now expected to take off at 1945 hours from the Mumbai airport, sources in the know said.

IndiGo said its flight 6E 1303, operating from Mumbai to Doha, was delayed due to a technical reason.

On Sunday morning, a passenger on X said the flight was stuck for four hours due to a technical problem and that the immigration authority was not giving permission to offload the passengers.

SpiceJet on Saturday cancelled its flight from the national capital to Darbhanga, triggering protests by passengers at the Delhi airport. In a statement, an airline spokesperson said its flight SG 495 from Delhi to Darbhanga was cancelled due to unforeseen operational reasons and apologised for the inconvenience caused to the passengers. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

‘Longest’ HUMAN CHAIN marks Democracy Day

From Bidar to Chamarajanagar, people from all walks of life came together to show unity

BENGALURU, 15 SEPT

Karnataka on Sunday marked the ‘International Day of Democracy’ by forming a ‘historic’ 2,500-km-long human chain as a symbol of equality, unity, fraternity, and participative governance.

The massive human chain, which according to the Karnataka government will be the “world’s longest”, was formed across the state from Bidar to Chamarajanagar, covering all 31 districts.

The State government had taken the lead in organising the large-scale event to mark the day in association with civil society.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah joined the human chain at the main event held in front of Vidhana Soudha, the seat of State legislature and secretariat here, along with senior Ministers and officials.

CM led by reading the preamble of the Constitution, following which people from various walks of life, including transgenders and differently-abled people held hands to form the human chain.

Similar events were held in all districts of the State in which Ministers, public representatives and senior officials took part.

A world record verifying team from London will arrive for the innovative and massive event, officials said.

The human chain will be approximately 2,500 km long, and is said to be the “longest in the history of the world”, they said.

According to the government, a total of 25 lakh people were expected to participate, with an average of more than 1,000 people for each kilometre.

In Mysuru city, even the Dasara elephants were part of the celebrations.

According to officials, the participants of the human chain will be given certificates.

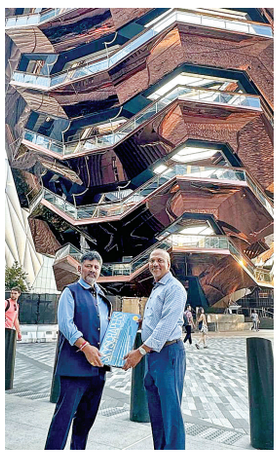
Addressing the event, Siddaramaiah cautioned against forces trying to divide the society and said at any cost these divisive forces should not be allowed to grow stronger.

“I request the democrats and the people of the state and the country to work towards destroying the divisive forces, as the divisive forces are trying to uproot the democracy and to make the constitution inactive. These divisive forces are against pluralism, social justice, and equality, they don’t want the poor to grow strong economically and socially,” he said.

Speaking on the occasion, KPCC working President MLA Tanveer Sait wanted the people to uphold the democratic principles, besides to protect the constitution that guaranteed equal rights, opportunities to all citizens irrespective of caste, creed sex and religious affiliation, and strive to strengthen democratic institutions. *—PTI/Salar News*

Students form human chain in Mysuru Road; Chief Minister Siddaramaiah with Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti, ministers KJ George, HC Mahadevappa and others; Pourakarmikas take part in a human chain organised as part of ‘International Democracy Day’ celebrations at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Sunday

PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD



Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar visited ‘The Edge’ sky-deck in New York on Sunday with architect Babu Kilara. They discussed incorporating similar design elements into Bengaluru’s upcoming sky-deck project. State approved a 250-metre sky-deck near NICE Road, which will be South Asia’s tallest

PHOTO: X@DKSHIVAKUMAR

BJP’s Munirathna remanded to 2-day police custody

TUMAKURU, 15 SEPT

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Sunday said BJP MLA N Munirathna, arrested in connection with two cases registered against him for allegedly issuing death threats to a BBMP contractor, has been sent to two-day police custody.

Minister ruled out any vendetta politics behind the former Minister’s arrest and said the action was taken in accordance with law.

Munirathna, who represents Rajarajeshwari Nagar Assembly segment in Bengaluru, was picked up from Nangli village in Kolar’s Mulbagal on Saturday evening on charges of harassing a Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) contractor for bribe, using casteist slurs against a former corporator, cheating, criminal intimidation and outraging a woman’s modesty.

Contractor Cheluvaraju, who is one of the complainants, has also released a purported audio recording of a phone conversation between him and Munirathna.

Addressing reporters here, he said on Sunday, he was produced before a judge, who remanded Munirathna to two days police custody.

Munirathna ***PHOTO: FB***

- Home Minister ruled out any vendetta politics behind the former Minister’s arrest and said the action was taken in accordance with law

“They will investigate, let’s see what happens.” “... his voice samples will be taken, it will be sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), and it will be verified whether it is his voice or not,” he added.

Munirathna in a video statement on Saturday had termed the allegations against him as “far from truth”, and claimed that a conspiracy was being hatched against him.

Citing violation of party discipline, State BJP has issued a show cause notice to Munirathna and asked him to clarify allegations before a committee within five days. *—PTI*

DK Suresh flays HDK, Ashoka for backing Munirathna

BENGALURU, 15 SEPT

Former MP DK Suresh has lashed out at Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy and Leader of Opposition R Ashoka for backing BJP MLA Munirathna, who was arrested for allegedly issuing death threats to and hurling casteist abuse on a BBMP contractor.

“Please clarify if your party’s stance is the same as his (Munirathan). How would you have reacted if a Congress leader had spoken like this?” Suresh asked. “Some leaders and the Leader of the Opposition are trying to give it a political hue. Is it right to do so when the evidence is crystal clear? His slurs against women are unacceptable and so are his words against the Vokkaliga community.”

About Munirathna’s mention of Suresh in a video released before his arrest, the Congress leader dismissed the reference, indicating that he has distanced himself from politics after the last election. *—Salar News*

LoP R Ashoka seeks NIA probe into Nagamangala violence

BENGALURU, 15 SEPT

Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly, R Ashoka on Sunday demanded a probe by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) into the recent violence in Mandya district, citing alleged involvement of Kerala-based persons with links to banned outfit such as Popular Front of India (PFI) in it.

Clashes broke out between two groups during a Ganesh idol procession in Nagamangala town in Mandya district, following which mobs went on a rampage, targeting several shops and vehicles leading to tension on Wednesday night.

“Locals have suspected the involvement of Kerala-based persons with links to banned organisations like PFI, Karnataka Forum for Dignity in the communal riots that took place during the religious immersion at Nagamangala. These wicked people had bought 150 masks before the riots, and destroyed CCTVs. Locals suspect that the crime was fully sponsored and premeditated,” Ashoka said in a post on ‘X’.

As the first 23 accused named in the FIR registered by the government are Hindus, it gives rise to suspicion whether the police are under pressure from banned organisations.

A few people, including two policemen, had sustained injuries in stone-pelting on Wednesday. *—PTI*

GANPATI BAPPA MORYA

People take out a Ganesha procession for the immersion of the idols from Shivajinagar to Ulsoor Lake, in Bengaluru, on Sunday

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

3 drown during Ganesha immersion in Tumakuru

TUMAKURU, 15 SEPT

Three persons including a father and son drowned during immersion of Lord Ganesh idol at Ranganahatti Lake in Turuvekere taluk here on Sunday, police said. The deceased have been identified as Revanna (aged about 50), his son Sharath, 26, and Dayanand, 22. The incident took place when Sharath and Dayanand entered the water body to immerse the Lord Ganesh idol after the procession. They were allegedly unable to swim as their legs were caught in sludge, and called those on the banks of the lake for help. Revanna immediately jumped into the water, but he too couldn’t swim and all the three drowned, police said. Police and Fire department personnel have reached the spot and a search is on to recover the bodies, officials said, adding that a case has been registered. *—PTI*

Cong upholds women’s rights better than BJP: Mahila Congress

BENGALURU, 15 SEPT

Congress government will stand firmly for women’s rights, dignity and their increased participation in politics, said Shilpi Arora, who oversees membership registration for Women’s Congress.

Arora contrasted Congress government’s efforts to address crimes against women with BJP administration. In BJP ruled-states, there is a rise in atrocities against women; Bilkis Bano rape case and incidents in Haryana and Uttarakhand were a testament to this, Arora said on the sidelines of celebrations to mark 40 years of Mahila Congress in Karnataka.

Speaking at a press conference on Sunday, State Mahila Congress President Sowmya Reddy said, “Congress has a long history of empowering women, iconic leaders like Indira Gandhi are an example of that. Congress will give more seats for women in next Assembly elections.”

Former minister C Motamma pushed for 50 per cent reservation for women across all sectors, urging women to take on leadership roles in both state and national politics. Former mayor Padmavati commended the leadership of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who has increased representation for women within the party. KPCC Vice President and trans activist Akai Padmashali echoed Congress’s commitment to women’s empowerment. *—Salar News*

Epsilon plans ₹9,000 cr anode facility in K’taka

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

Battery materials manufacturer Epsilon Advanced Materials is planning to set up a Rs 9,000-crore anode plant in Karnataka with an annual production capacity of 90,000 tonne, a top official of the company said. The investment in the plant would be made in two phases. In the first phase, Rs 4,000 crore would be invested and the remaining Rs 5,000 crore would be pumped in in the second phase, Epsilon Group Managing Director Vikram Handa said. With increasing demand of electric vehicles in India, there is a need for Indian cell manufacturing companies to set up battery plants in the country. Epsilon products will act as a sustainable and reliable supplier of anode and cathode material to these cell companies. This way, Epsilon is playing a key role in the raw material processing ecosystem within the country and even for global demand. The company is also building a new project in Odisha and announced an investment of Rs 10,000 crore in phases. The first phase is under construction. *—PTI*

PHOTO: INDIATV

CCB seizes 18 mobile phones from central jail

BENGALURU, 15 SEPT

Central Crime Branch (CCB) conducted a raid in Parappana Agrahara Jail on Sunday, seizing 18 mobile phones from notorious rowdy sheeter Wilson Garden Naga and his associates. This raid comes in the wake of a viral photo that caused widespread outrage, showing accused Darshan receiving royal treatment at Bengaluru Central Jail. The image, which also featured Wilson Garden Naga, raised serious concerns about corruption and mismanagement within the prison system.

According to a press release from the City police, Naga was allegedly using the confiscated mobile phones to issue threats from within the jail. Along with the phones, CCB officials also seized drugs and money that were reportedly being used to facilitate criminal operations behind bars.

The raid was carried out following intelligence reports that Naga continued his illegal activities while incarcerated. Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayanand has ordered an internal probe.

He instructed Additional Commissioner of CCB Chandragupta, to conduct a thorough investigation and submit a report on situation inside jail. *—Salar News*

‘MISSING’ FOOTPATHS

Mahadevapura pedestrians at risk due to unsafe footpaths

MEGHANA PRASAD
BENGALURU, 15 SEPT

Residents of Mahadevapura zone are grappling with hazardous footpaths that pose serious risks to pedestrians, especially the elderly, children and people with disabilities. Poorly maintained or completely missing footpath slabs are forcing people to walk on, endangering lives.

The residents have urged Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) to prioritise footpath repairs. Several key areas, including the stretch from Knightsbridge to Brigade Tech Gardens, Haralur Road and Sarjapur Road, are hazardous. Many footpaths are not only broken but also cluttered with garbage, and the missing drain covers turn these paths into traps. During rains, the blocked drains overflow, leaving behind pools of stagnant water, compounding risks.

Sandeep Kumar, a software engineer who is a resident of Trinity Acres and Woods, Sarjapur Road, said: “Right above the broken footpaths are wires connected to poles.

PHOTO: SALAR

This can be dangerous if they are electricity wires.” Sarita Patil, a 69-year-old retired school teacher and a resident of August Grand Apartments on Sarjapur-Marathahalli road, said: “My 72-year-old husband and I were close to having a mishap due to the open footpath slab.”

The residents have joined forces with Bengaluru NavaNirmana Party (BNP) to demand that BBMP take some action on this. BBMP said the repair work was getting delayed due to the shortage of funds. “The footpath maintenance funds had not yet been released due to which the contractors are not paid yet,” said M Lokesh, Chief Engineer of Mahadevapura. “We are awaiting clearance to disburse payments to contractors, after which repairs will commence.”

BNP leaders demanded immediate corrective measures “Pedestrian safety is not a luxury; it’s a necessity. BBMP must ensure that funds are utilised effectively for basic infrastructure like footpaths,” Lalithamba BV, Governing Council Member and told **Salar News.**

When **Salar News** approached Arvind Limbavali, the MLA of Mahadevapura, he was not available for comments. *—Salar News*

Ex-MUDA Chairman refutes claims of on-site registration

MYSURU, 15 SEPT

Former MUDA chairman HV Rajeev on Sunday refuted allegations that he allowed registering 800 sites to Jnana Ganga House Building Credit Cooperative society on a single day. Rajeev said he has given approval for four different projects in a single day after taking approval at a MUDA meeting, but didn’t allow registration of 848 sites in a single day. Former MUDA commissioner DB Natesh misled the government on this by writing a letter to the government in his absence, without informing the board of directors of Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA), Rajeev said.

Rajeev said he had complained to then district Minister ST Somashekhar and then urban development minister Byrathi Basavaraju on this. Then MUDA member MN Navinkumar had also filed a complaint against Natesh for taking decisions without discussing with other members.

He said 848 sites were allotted to his Jnanaganga Society as per law after it was approved. *—Salar News*

Decadal census to be held soon: Sources

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

The government has started preparations for conducting the decadal census, but a decision is yet to be taken on including a column on caste as part of the exercise, sources said on Sunday. Speaking on condition of anonymity, one source said that the decadal census will be conducted soon. India has conducted the census every 10 years since 1881. The first phase of this decade's census was expected to begin on 1 April, 2020 but had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The law reserving one-third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies shall come into effect after an exercise of delimitation is undertaken based on the relevant figures of the first census recorded after the Act has come into force. *—PTI*

Cong leader killed in attack in WB's Malda

MALDA, 15 SEPT

A local Congress leader was killed after gunshots were fired and crude bombs were hurled at him in West Bengal's Malda district on Sunday morning, police said. The deceased was Sheikh Saifuddin, an influential Congress of the Gopalpur area in Manikchak. His family alleged that goons backed by the TMC killed him, a charge dismissed by the State's ruling party. The incident happened at the Dharampur Stand market around 9 am. Saifuddin's family claimed that four-five men with their faces covered opened fire and hurled two crude bombs targetting him. He died on the spot, they said. The incident, which happened at the crowded market, led to tension in the area. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

'PM misguiding nation over terrorism in J&K'

SRINAGAR, 15 SEPT

Former chief minister Farooq Abdullah on Sunday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was "misleading" the nation by claiming that terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir will rise again if the National Conference-Congress alliance came to power in the Union territory. "I want to ask the PM that their government has been ruling for the past five years since the abrogation of Article 370. They used to say that Article 370 is responsible for terrorism here but today there is no Article 370.Where did this terrorism come from?" the NC leader said. "Where are these guns coming from which are killing civilians and martyring the soldiers. Today, it is not our government. Let him answer this," Abdullah told. *—PTI*

Shinde spreading 'fake news', says Cong leader Thorat

MUMBAI, 15 SEPT

Congress Legislature Party leader in Maharashtra Balasaheb Thorat on Sunday accused Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis of creating religious discord by spreading "fake news". Thorat's comments came a day after Shinde said Congress government in Karnataka was trying to shut down Ganesh festival celebrations. Shinde on Saturday also said the opposition targeted his government over the collapse of a statue of Shivaji Maharaj (in Sindhudurg), but remains silent about police in Congress-ruled Karnataka putting a Ganesh idol in a police van. Videos purportedly showing Karnataka police taking away a Ganesh idol from protestors and putting it in a police van have gone viral on social media. Earlier, they protested against a statement of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi regarding reservation, which he did not make, Thorat said. *—PTI*

Who will replace Kejri as next CM? Sunita and Atishi in fray

Kejriwal said the next CM's name will be decided on Tuesday

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's unexpected announcement to resign after two days kicked up a strong buzz on Sunday over the names of his wife Sunita and his ministers Atishi and Gopal Rai as his possible replacement.

Kejriwal, who was earlier this week released on bail from the Tihar Jail in the excise policy graft case, said that he would hold a meeting of the AAP MLAs in the next couple of days and a party leader would take over as the chief minister.

The Chief Minister addressing the AAP leaders and workers at the party headquarters here made the announcement to resign and hold the post again only after he was given a "certificate of honesty" by the people of Delhi.

AAP Goa head Amit Palekar said Kejriwal's decision to step down from the post is a powerful demonstration of his commitment to honest politics. Among the probables for the chief minister's post, Atishi was considered head and shoulders above others for holding maximum number of portfolios in the Delhi government, including education, finance, PWD, revenue and services, and is considered close to Kejriwal. She is also a frontline spokesperson of the party defending AAP government and Kejriwal, and attacking the BJP in her regular press conferences.

The potential candidates for the chief minister's post also include the names of ministers Kailash Gahlot and Saurabh Bharadwaj. He too is a well-known face of the AAP, often engaged in defending the party and its leaders and counter-attacking the BJP and its government at the Centre on a range of governance-related and political issues.

Kejriwal said he would resign after two days and demand early polls in Delhi, while vowing not to sit in the Chief Minister's chair till people give him a "certificate of honesty". AAP convener, who was released on bail from Tihar on Friday in the excise policy graft case, said he would hold a meeting of AAP MLAs in the next couple of days and a party leader would take over as chief minister.

There was also speculation that AAP may bring forward some dalit or Muslim legislator to hold the chief minister's post in view of the Delhi Assembly polls. There are 12 reserved constituencies and nearly half a dozen seats with significant minority population in the city. *—PTI*

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal with ex-deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia and others during a meeting, in New Delhi on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

MODI'S RALLY

'B'deshi, Rohingya threat to J'khand'

JAMSHEDPUR, 15 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday accused the ruling JMM-led coalition in Jharkhand of encouraging Bangladeshi and Rohingya infiltration for vote bank politics.

He asserted that these infiltrators pose a significant threat to the state by altering the demographic landscape of Santhal Parganas and Kolhan regions. "Bangladeshi and Rohingya infiltrators have become a major threat to Santhal Parganas and Kolhan regions. The demography of these regions is changing fast. The tribal population is on the decline. The infiltrators are establishing control of the panchayat system, grabbing land, indulging in atrocities on daughters of the state...Each Jharkhand resident is feeling unsafe," the Prime Minister said while addressing the 'Parivartan Maharally' of the BJP at Gopal Maidan here.

Modi also virtually launched various projects worth Rs 660 crore from Ranchi in Jharkhand. These include laying the foundation stone for the Madhupur bypass line in Deoghar district and the Hazaribag town coaching depot. He also dedicated to the nation doubling of the Kurkura-Kanaroan line, which is a part of the Bondamunda-Ranchi single-line section and the Rourkela-Gomoh route via Ranchi, Muri and Chandrapura stations. The project will help in increased mobility of goods and passenger traffic. Besides, the PM also launched four road-under-bridges.

However, Modi was slated to hold a roadshow in Jharkhand's Jamshedpur on Sunday, but it has been cancelled due to heavy rain and bad weather in the city.

Cong jabs Modi on Jharkhand visit

With Modi visiting Jharkhand, Congress on Sunday asked why are the people of Jamshedpur still facing the problem of "poor connectivity" and also accused the Prime Minister of depriving the tribals their religious identity and refusing to recognise the Sarna Code.

They will now have to either choose one of the religions available in the options or leave the column blank, he claimed.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh also asked why the Adityapur Industrial Area had not received environmental clearance yet. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

MODI VIRTUALLY FLAGS OFF 6 VANDE BHARAT TRAINS

RANCHI, 15 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday virtually flagged off six Vande Bharat trains for Jharkhand, Odisha, Bihar and UP at Ranchi.

Earlier, the PM was scheduled to flag off these trains from Tatanagar but his chopper could not take off from Ranchi airport due to poor visibility and inclement weather conditions. On the occasion, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Jharkhand Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar were present at Tatanagar station.

The new trains will run on the Tatanagar-Patna, Brahmapur-Tatanagar, Rourkela-Howrah, Deoghar-Varanasi, Bhagalpur-Howrah and Gaya-Howrah routes. The trains will offer faster connectivity, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement. Modi underscored that the expansion of rail connectivity in the eastern states will strengthen the economy of the region and hugely benefit businesses, professionals and students. *—PTI*

VP targets Rahul over quota remark

MUMBAI, 15 SEPT

In a veiled attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his remarks on "ending reservation", Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday said such comments by a person holding a constitutional post shows an "anti-constitutional mindset".

Addressing a public event in Mumbai, Dhankhar also said awareness about India's Constitution is highly needed as some people have forgotten its soul.

"A person from a constitutional post saying on a foreign land that reservation should be ended underscores the same anti-constitutional mindset. The baton of prejudices against reservation has been handed over. It is the same old anti-constitutional mindset," he said without taking the name of Gandhi, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

During a recent visit to the US, Gandhi, said Congress would think of scrapping reservations when "India is a fair place", which he said is not the case right now.

However, at press interaction in the US later, Gandhi had said he was misquoted to show that he was against reservations. "I have been saying again and again, we are going to increase reservations beyond 50 per cent," Gandhi clarified. He criticised then prime minister late Indira Gandhi for imposing Emergency in the country on 25 June, 1975 and said it was "the darkest period of our democracy". *—PTI*

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar speaks during the inauguration of Samvidhan Mandir in Maharashtra on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

MUFTI ONLY BROUGHT DESTRUCTION TO J&K, SAYS OMAR ABDULLAH

SRINAGAR, 15 SEPT

National Conference (NC) vice president Omar Abdullah Sunday hit out at People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti, saying she has brought nothing but destruction to Jammu and Kashmir.

On Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's announcement of resignation, the NC leader said it remains to be seen what will be his next steps.

"Mehbooba Mufti has brought nothing but destruction to Jammu and Kashmir. If anyone has played the biggest role in bringing BJP (in J&K) then it is PDP and its leadership," Abdullah told reporters in Anantnag district of south Kashmir. Referring to the violent street protests after the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani in 2016 that left over 90 civilians dead, Abdullah said Mufti should give an account of 2016 before pointing fingers at him.

"She talked about milk and toffee...she has not yet apologised for that. She has not yet apologised for bringing the BJP here. She has not apologised for pushing Jammu and Kashmir towards this destruction. Why is she targeting me? Let her clear her own record first," the NC leader added.

He what compulsion did the PDP have to form an alliance with the BJP in 2015? "We were ready to give them the government at that time. The NC and the Congress first sent a message of their support to Mufti Sahab and after his death, to Mehbooba Mufti. Why did they reject it?" he asked. He said Mufti used to say that time that they would bring more confidence building measures from Delhi because of the alliance with the BJP, but "one after the other, all our CBMs were stopped". *—PTI*

Will stake claim to CM's post if BJP wins in Haryana, says Anil Vij

CHANDIGARH, 15 SEPT

Senior BJP leader and former Minister Anil Vij on Sunday said he will stake claim for the chief minister's post if the party returns to power in Haryana after the October 5 Assembly polls.

The six-time MLA's remarks come at a time when the party has already made it clear that Nayab Singh Saini will be the chief minister if the BJP returns to power.

Saini is also the party's chief ministerial face in the polls. Whether the party makes me or not, it is up to them. But if they make me CM, I will change Haryana's 'takdeer and tasveer' (face and destiny of Haryana), the Ambala Cantt MLA said.

When asked to clarify the remarks he made while interacting with reporters in Ambala, Vij later told PTI over phone, "I am the party's senior-most MLA and have won six elections and am contesting my seventh one. I have never sought anything from my party so far. "It is up to the party high command to take a call," he said.

When pointed out the Saini has already been declared chief ministerial candidate, Vij said, "There is no bar on staking the claim. I will make my claim, let the party take a call".

Notably, in March, Manohar Lal Khattar was replaced by Saini as chief minister. Polling for the 90 Assembly seats in Haryana will be held on October 5 and the votes will be counted on 8 October. *—PTI*

Kolkata horror: Protests by docs rock West Bengal

KOLKATA, 15 SEPT

Several people demonstrated outside the CBI office here at CGO Complex on Sunday morning when its sleuths were taking Abhijit Mondal, the Tala Police Station officer-in-charge who was arrested in the RG Kar hospital medic's rape-murder case, for a customary medical examination.

The agitators gathered outside the CGO Complex, carrying placards and posters, and shouted slogans demanding justice for the woman doctor and criticising the police for its handling of the investigation before the CBI took over the case.

Similarly, rallies and demonstrations demanding justice for the RG Kar hospital's doctor who was raped and murdered rocked Kolkata.

Retired Army officers, who were alumni of the Purulia Sainik School, marched from Jadavpur 8B Bus Stand to Golpark in south Kolkata with placards in their hands amid rains. In Wellington in the central part of the city, former students of Calcutta Girls' High School marched in a rally.

Hundreds of nurses held a rally at Karunamoyee in Salt Lake, seeking safety at the workplace.

Meanwhile, agitating junior doctors in West Bengal on Sunday said they remain steadfast in their resolve to pursue justice for the medic raped and murdered at the RG Kar hospital, a day after another attempt to resolve the impasse with the State government fell through.

Amid persistent rain, the protesting doctors continued their sit-in outside 'Swasthya Bhavan', the state health department headquarters in Salt Lake, for the sixth consecutive day.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had on Saturday made a surprise visit to the site where the doctors were protesting and assured them that their demands would be addressed, but the proposed meeting fell through, with the protesters claiming that they were asked to leave "unceremoniously" after waiting for three hours at the gates of the CM's residence. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Do not use lethal weapons during protests: Manipur cops

IMPHAL, 15 SEPT

The Manipur Police on Sunday expressed concern over the use of sophisticated weapons to target security personnel during protests and urged demonstrators to refrain from employing such means to make their point.

Addressing reporters, DIG (Range 1) N Herojit Singh said, "We want to remind the public that the police department's duty is to maintain law and order and to respond to armed attacks by miscreants. We have sustained multiple casualties during these challenging times."

Highlighting the shift in protest tactics, the DIG said, "In recent agitations, traditional forms of protests have been replaced with lethal methods targeting security forces.

Demonstrators have engaged in stone pelting, shooting iron pieces from slingshots, firing tear gas shells, and using automatic firearms."

"We have evidence of automatic weapons being fired during protests. At Khabeisoi, firing from automatic weapons injured an officer in-charge of Imphal East Commando and another personnel recently. In Kakwa, Imphal West district, firing from automatic weapons left marks on our vehicles," he claimed. *—PTI*

BSP LOOKS TO RECLAIM LOST SPACE

LUCKNOW, 15 SEPT

Following a series of electoral setbacks, the BSP is now looking at the forthcoming Haryana assembly elections and the by-elections in Uttar Pradesh to reclaim its lost political space, and the party's young national coordinator Akash Anand is expected to play a crucial role in it.

Akash Anand, the nephew of Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati, has seen a string of ups and down in the past 10 months. Mayawati named him as her political successor in December 2023, later removed him from the post calling him "immature" and subsequently reinstated him after the party's crushing defeat in Lok Sabha polls.

Now, Akash Anand, 29, has been named in the party's list of star campaigners for the Haryana assembly polls released on Friday. In the list, his name features just after Mayawati and his father Anand Kumar. Anand's recent speeches, however, have been more measured as compared to his rallies in the run-up to Lok Sabha polls, sources said.

BSP's UP unit president Vishwanath Pal told PTI that after Haryana elections, "Akash bhaiya" would also be entrusted with the responsibility of by-elections in 10 assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh.

This also led to Mayawati temporarily removing him from the post of national coordinator in May. She had then also described him as "immature" but was quick to reinstate him soon after the party's poor performance in the general elections where it did not win any seats. *—PTI*

'COMPETITIVE ECONOMY'

Infra, agri key focus areas of 100 days of Modi 3.0

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Central government, also known as Modi 3.0, has prioritised significant advancements in science, technology, energy, and security to meet national needs and position India as a competitive economy.

In its first 100 days, the Modi 3.0 government has launched projects worth around Rs 15 lakh crore. These include key developments in the sectors of science, technology, energy, and security.

Key initiatives include the establishment of an Rs 1,000 crore venture capital fund for space startups, the successful launch of the EOS-08 satellite aboard SSLV-D3 on 16 August, the creation of the National Research Fund with an allocation of Rs 50,000 crore, and the launch of the 'Vigyan Dhara' scheme with Rs 10,500 crore.

As per sources, the first National Space Day was celebrated (in honour of the success of Chandrayaan and Mangalyaan). Moreover, a semiconductor unit will be set up in Sanand, Gujarat, with an investment of Rs 3,300 crore. It will have a production capacity of 6 million chips per day.

In the fields of energy and security, the PM Modi-led government has given approval for hydroelectric projects in the Northeast: a joint venture between state entities and central public sector enterprises with an investment of Rs 4,100 crore. Under the VGF (Viability Gap Funding) Scheme, an approval has been given for hydroelectric projects worth over Rs 12,400 crore.

The 100 days of welfare for the public also include the approval of offshore wind energy projects worth Rs 7,450 crore.

The projects also include faster adoption and manufacturing of electric vehicles in India phase-III (FAME-III) scheme in the same direction.

Narendra Modi took oath as Prime Minister for his third successive term at an impressive ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan on 9 June, with 71 MPs from the BJP and its allies joining the party-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government. *—ANI*

Government has launched projects worth ₹15 lakh cr **PHOTO: ANI**

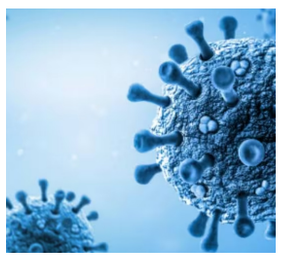


PHOTO: PIXABAY

Kerala confirms Malappuram man's death due to Nipah

MALAPPURAM, 15 SEPT

The 24-year-old man who died recently at a private hospital in Malappuram was infected with the Nipah virus, Kerala Health Minister Veena George said on Sunday. George said the suspicion of Nipah infection arose after a death investigation conducted by the Regional Medical Officer. "The available samples were immediately sent for testing and it turned out to be positive," the minister said in a video message. Malappuram native who reached the state from Bengaluru died on 9 September, after which his available samples were sent for testing to Kozhikode Medical college hospital laboratory. *—PTI*

Netfix denies 'Squid Games' plagiarism claim

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

Director Soham Shah has filed a lawsuit against Netflix for allegedly plagiarising his 2009 film "Luck" to make the Korean series "Squid Game", a claim the streamer on Sunday said holds no merit. "This claim has no merit. 'Squid Game' was created by and written by Hwang Dong Hyuk and we intend to defend this matter vigorously," a Netflix spokesperson said in a statement. According to the documents of the lawsuit obtained by American outlet TMZ, "Squid Game", which became the most watched series on Netflix when it premiered in 2021 -- is a "rip-off" of the movie starring Imran Khan, Shruti Haasan, and Sanjay Dutt. According to TMZ, in "Luck" "it's only after characters start competing that they realise losing any of the challenges means death. *—PTI*

6 killed, 11 injured in road accidents in Odisha

BARIPADA/BOLANGIR, 15 SEPT

At least six people were killed and 11 others injured in three separate road accidents in Odisha, police said on Sunday. Two people, riding a motorcycle, were killed on Sunday morning after being hit by a vehicle on National Highway 26 near Madhiapali in Bolangir district, a senior officer said. Locals spotted the two lying in a pool of blood and informed the police. Four people were killed and 11 others injured in two separate accidents in Mayurbhanj district late on Saturday. Two people, riding a motorcycle, rammed into a truck and died on the spot near Palbani on NH-18 on the outskirts of Baripada town, the police said. In another accident, a speeding car with 13 people on board hit a roadside tree near Khasadiha on the Baripada-Lulung road, another officer said. *—PTI*

UP drowning: SUV driver ignored warning, claim cops

FARIDABAD, 15 SEPT

The driver of a car that got stuck in the flooded Old Faridabad Railway underpass leading to the death of its two occupants had disregarded the barricades put up to prevent people from going to the inundated area, a police official has claimed. Viraj, 26, a cashier at a private bank branch, and Punyashray Sharma, 48, the manager, were returning home in Greater Faridabad from Gurugram on Friday night when their sports utility vehicle (SUV) got stuck in the flooded underpass around 11:50 pm, police said. XUV 700 entered the underpass ignoring all warnings and water gushed into the vehicle, they said. The passersby attempted to help the duo stuck in the car and after a lot of efforts, *—PTI*

VHP leaders booked in Shimla mosque dispute

10 people were injured & over 50 booked for violence

SHIMLA, 15 SEPT

VHP leaders, former councillors and chief of panchayats were among 50 people booked for violence during a protest that was held here last week demanding the demolition of an illegal portion of a mosque in the Sanjauli area, police said on Sunday.

Protesters clashed with security personnel on 11 September, breaking barricades and pelting stones as police used water cannons and batons to disperse them. About 10 people, including police and women, were injured.

Call detail records of people who instigated the protest have been gathered and more cases will be registered, the Superintendent of Police of Shimla Sanjeev Kumar Gandhi told the PTI.

"There is CCTV footage, video and photograph evidence of people carrying stones in their hands that were thrown at officers on duty," the officer said.

Protesters, who had gathered on the call of Hindu groups, try to break security barricades during a protest, at Sanjauli, in Shimla **PHOTO: PTI**

"It was a pre-planned protest to disturb the peace. Those who provoked the whole incident on social media have been identified and their act and conduct endorse how they participated in the crime," the SP said.

"In a video, a person was seen standing on a tempo and provoking the people to break the prohibitory order under section 163 of Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). We did not receive any application seeking permission to protest," he said.

The SP said two police personnel sustained serious injuries, with one on the back and another on the head, and those guilty of it would be dealt with strictly as per the law.

Amid tension in Shimla over the Sanjauli mosque issue, a Muslim welfare committee last Thursday offered to demolish the unauthorised part while members of the community themselves pulled down a wall of a mosque in government land in Mandi. *—PTI*

FOR GOVERNMENT JOBS

Assam exam held peacefully amid internet suspension

GUWAHATI, 15 SEPT

Assam Direct Recruitment Examination (ADRE) to fill vacant posts of Group III employees in state government was held on Sunday amid tight security and suspension of internet connectivity for three and a half hours across the state, an official said.

There was no report of any untoward incident from any of the 2,305 centres in the state.

After the exams ended, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the first ADRE exam had concluded peacefully.

"My deepest gratitude to all the officers and staff of the Assam government who have successfully completed this monumental task without any issue", Sarma posted on X.

The CM said that he once again assured "our younger generation that transparency will remain our hallmark when it comes to government recruitment".

Candidates were seen queuing up before the examination centres since early morning with gates scheduled to open from 10 am.

Internet services were suspended from 10 am to 1.30 pm.

Heavy deployment of security forces were also seen outside examination centres.

Altogether 11,23,204 candidates were eligible to appear for the examination in 2,305 centres across the state.

The authorities had marked 429 centres as 'sensitive' due to their geographical location and past history of cheating and other malpractices.

Internet connectivity has been suspended as on earlier occasions some unscrupulous elements resorted to unfair means, an official said.. *—PTI*

Death toll in Meerut house collapse rises to 10

MEERUT/LUCKNOW, 15 SEPT

The death toll in the collapse of a three-storey house in Zakir Nagar here has risen to 10 while the rescue work at the site is still underway, the district administration said on Sunday.

In a statement, the administration said one person is feared to be still trapped under the debris.

The deceased have been identified as Sajid, 40, his daughter Saniya, 15, son Saqib, 11, Simra (one-and-half years), Reeza, 7, Naffo, 63, Farhana, 20, Alisa, 18, Aliya, 6 and Rimsa (5 months).

The condition of Sofiyan, 6, is stable, the administration said in the statement.

Of those injured, Naeem, 22, Nadeem, 26, Saqib, 20 and Saina, 38 are undergoing treatment at the Lala Lajpat Rai Memorial Medical College.

The three-storey house collapsed on Saturday afternoon, trapping 15 people under the debris.

Speaking to reporters, Meerut District Magistrate of Deepak Meena said, "When the rescue operation started, the relatives gave information about 15 people. Three managed to escape when the building was collapsing."

"The death toll stands at 10 till now while five persons are alive. The rescue operations will continue till the entire debris is removed," the officer said.

"The bodies have been kept at the medical college and a post-mortem examination is being conducted," he said.

Senior officials, including Meerut Zone Additional Director General of Police D K Thakur, Divisional Commissioner Selva Kumari J, Inspector General of Police Nachiketa Jha and Senior Superintendent of Police Vipin Tada, reached the spot to monitor the rescue operation.

NDRF, fire brigade and police teams are engaged in the rescue operation. *—PTI*

DOC BEATEN UP AT HOSPITAL IN GUJARAT; 3 HELD

BHAVNAGAR, 15 SEPT

A doctor was allegedly beaten up by three persons after he asked them to remove their footwear before entering the emergency room at a private hospital in Gujarat's Bhavnagar, police said on Sunday.

The police on Saturday arrested the trio involved in the attack at Shreya Hospital in Sihor town, an official said.

The incident occurred on 12 September when the accused arrived at the hospital for the treatment of a woman who had suffered a head injury, he said.

"When they entered the emergency room, the doctor asked them to remove their footwear, following which they started abusing him and the nursing staff present there," the first information report (FIR) stated.

The men started thrashing Dr Jaideepsinh Gohil, 33, and left him with injuries. They also damaged medicines and other equipment in the room, it stated.

The accused also allegedly threatened to kill the doctor, the FIR stated. *—PTI*

Rain lashes parts of south Bengal, more showers in store

KOLKATA, 15 SEPT

Moderate to heavy rain lashed parts of south Bengal, including Kolkata, on Sunday under the impact of a deep depression in the region, the IMD said.

A deep depression is a more intense stage of a low-pressure system and typically precedes the formation of a cyclonic storm.

The weather system lay about 40 km west-northwest of Kolkata and 130 km east-southeast of Bankura, it said.

The deep depression is likely to move westwards across Jharkhand and north Chhattisgarh, and weaken gradually into a depression during the subsequent 24 hours, the weather office said.

Kolkata and its neighbourhood recorded over 62 mm rainfall during 6:30 am.

The IMD said heavy rain is likely in Kolkata over the next 12 hours.

Waterlogging was reported in several parts of the city since morning, while traffic movement was slow on arterial roads such as EM Bypass, Central Avenue, Beleghata Road and Sarani. *—PTI*

People walk through waterlogged streets in Kolkata **PHOTO: PTI**

Water level of Saryu River rises

The water level of the Saryu River in Ayodhya has risen amid rainfall in the region.Central Water Commission official Balram said that the water level of Saryu river has crossed the danger mark. "The water level has been increasing right now it is 93.100 m, which is 37 cm above than the danger level, Meanwhile, boat services have been temporarily suspended in Varanasi due to a rise in the level of the Ganga River. *—PTI*

Annoyed by advocates' false statements, SC says 'faith is shaken'

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

Expressing displeasure over the lawyers repeatedly making false statements before the court as well as in the petitions to secure premature release of the convicts, the Supreme Court has said when it comes across cases like this, "our faith is shaken".

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih in its recent order recorded its anguish and said that it has come across several cases in the last three weeks where false statements have been made in the pleading.

"A large number of petitions are being filed in this court wherein a grievance is made about non grant of permanent remission. During the last three weeks, this is the 6th or 7th case which we have come across where blatantly false statements have been made in the pleadings," the bench said in its September 10 order uploaded recently.

Large number of petitions are being filed in Supreme Court wherein a grievance is made about non grant of permanent remission **PHOTO: PTI**

It pointed out that on a miscellaneous cases hearing day in the apex court, there are 60 to 80 matters listed before every bench and it is not possible for the judges to go through each and every page of each and every case listed before the court, though an endeavour to go through every case very meticulously.

"Our system works on faith. We trust the members of the Bar when we hear cases. But when we come across cases like this, our faith is shaken," the bench said. *—PTI*

ON PRETEXT OF MARRIAGE

Consent to sex under fear amounts to rape: HC

PRAYAGRAJ, 15 SEPT

Sexual relationship even with the consent of a woman who is under fear or misconception would amount to rape, the Allahabad High Court has ruled.

Justice Anis Kumar Gupta dismissed a petition filed by Raghav Kumar, challenging the criminal proceedings going on against him in a case of rape on the pretext of marriage.

In the petition filed before the court, the accused had prayed to quash the charge sheet filed against him in December 2018 in a complaint lodged under Section 376 (rape) of the IPC at a police station in the Agra district.

On the said chargesheet, criminal proceedings started, which is pending before the court of Agra's district and sessions judge. It was alleged in the FIR that the applicant first established a physical

PHOTO: PTI

relationship with the woman by rendering her unconscious. Thereafter, he allegedly continued to physically exploit her on the pretext of marriage.

The counsel for the petitioner submitted that the applicant and the woman were known to each other and both were preparing for civil services examination.

The state counsel opposed the petition, saying the inception of the relationship between the parties was based on "cheating" and it was a "forcible act" on the part of the applicant herein, for which no consent was there. *—PTI*

Two women Navy officers embark on sailing expedition

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

Two Indian Navy women officers -- Lt Commander Roopa A and Lt Commander Dilna K -- would be embarking on an arduous blue-water voyage around the world soon.

The duo will be undertaking the expedition of circumnavigating the globe on board Indian naval sailing vessel (INSV) Tarini, Navy spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal said on Sunday.

"Sagar Parikrama would be a gruelling voyage requiring extreme skills, physical fitness and mental alertness. The officers have been training rigorously and gained thousands of miles of experience under their belt," Commander Madhwal said.

The officers, as part of a six member crew, had participated in trans-oceanic expedition from Goa to Rio de Janeiro via Cape Town and back last year. *—PTI*

THIRUVONAM CELEBRATIONS

Keralites celebrate Onam traditional way, except in Wayanad

T'PURAM, 15 SEPT

Keralites celebrated the harvest festival of Onam with traditional fervour and gaiety across the state on Sunday.

Marking the "Thiruvonam", the most auspicious day of the 10-day-long festival, people wore traditional 'kasavu' sarees and 'mundu' (dhoti) and visited temples in villages and towns early in the morning.

However, the state witnessed traditional celebrations as always with youngsters and children decorating their homes by laying colourful floral carpets and elders gifting "onakkodi" (new clothes) to other members of the family.

Artists perform Thiruvathira at the Sreepadmanabha Swamy temple on Thiruvonam, in Thiruvananthapuram, on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

"Oonjal', the traditional swing, also graced the courtyards of many homes as part of festivities. A sumptuous 'onasadya' (feast) was prepared by family members comprising various vegetarian dishes and delicious dessert 'payasam'.

Reviving the memories of a glorious past, traditional games including Vadamvali" (tug of war) and "Uriyadi" (break the pot) and art forms like "Pulikkali", "Thiruvathira", "Theyyam were organised under the aegis of local clubs.

Legend has it that envious of his popularity, the Devas (Gods) sought the help of Lord Vishnu to get him banished into the netherworld but before going down, Mahabali secured a boon from Vishnu to visit his subjects every year on Thiruvonam Day. *—PTI*

This Onam, Wayanad mourns landslide victims

WAYANAD, 15 SEPT

Cutting across caste and religious barriers, people laid floral carpets and played traditional games together in these hamlets in the district till last year. They had gathered at the village temple and school grounds with various festivities to mark the "thiruvonam" day in these years. But, on the auspicious 'thiruvonam' today, there is no "pookkalam" (floral carpets), "oonjal" (swing) or any other signs of celebrations in Mundakkai and Chooralmala in Wayanad district, which was rocked by massive landslides on 30 July.

Majority of Chooralmala and Mundakkai natives are now living in rented houses.

Vijayan, who lives in a tiny rented house in nearby Meppadi, could not hold his tears back while recollecting the memories of their Onam celebrations in Mundakkai till last year. *—PTI*

SOUND OF SPEED AIRSHOW

The United States Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron, the Thunderbirds, fly in formation at the Sound of Speed Airshow in St Joseph, in US
PHOTO: PTI

Human embryo models are raising ethical questions

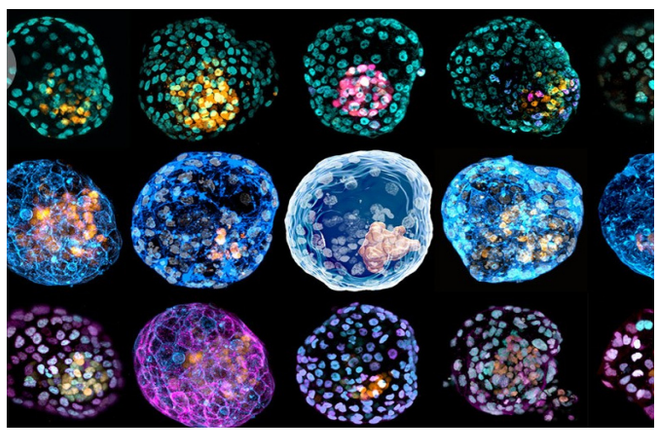
Under his microscope, Jun Wu could see several tiny spheres, each less than 1 millimetre wide. They looked just like human embryos: a dark cluster of cells surrounded by a cavity, and then another ring of cells.

But Wu, a stem-cell biologist at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, knew that these spheres were not what they seemed. They were laboratory-grown models of embryos, and they were far from perfect replicas.

Entire groups of cells were absent and others were there that didn't belong. And Wu knew that, eventually, the models would perish abruptly and chaotically.

If embryo models were houses, then behind the facade they would have uneven floors, distorting mirrors and ghosts in their closets. Nonetheless, dozens of labs are competing to grow the best likeness of a human embryo.

This high-stakes, high-drama period "is shrouded in mystery", says Nicolas Rivron, a developmental biologist at the Institute of Molecular Biotechnology of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna. In the womb, these embryos are too small to be observed using ultrasound. And in the lab, there are technical, ethical — and often legal — limits to studying real embryos outside the body beyond 14 days after conception.



Models of human embryos at the blastocyst stage, which are called blastoids
PHOTO: NATURE/ MONASH UNIV

Epic show

The meeting of egg and sperm triggers a process of rapid and precisely choreographed cell division and differentiation. In the first week, around 100 cells form a hollow circle known as the blastocyst. This is made up of three distinct groups that eventually grow into the embryo, the supportive yolk sac and the placenta.

Then the embryo implants itself in the uterus. From about two weeks, embryos go through a process known as gastrulation, in which cells are committed to becoming one of three cell types and organize into layers. These layers differentiate further into lungs, guts, muscles and other organs, in a process known as organogenesis.

Writing the rules

Ever since the first embryo models appeared, ethicists have been striving to address the dilemmas that they pose. The International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) developed guidelines in 2021; many countries are considering their own guidelines and legislation.

Australia's rules are some of the most stringent in the world. In 2020, biochemist Jose Polo, who leads a team based at Monash University in Melbourne and the University of Adelaide, informed Australia's regulatory body overseeing embryo research, the National Health and Medical Research Council, that he had developed blastoids, and was asked to put the work on hold.

The regulator wanted to assess whether blastoids met the criteria to be considered an embryo under the current laws, which define embryos as biological entities with the potential to develop to a stage, roughly two weeks in, at which a structure called the primitive streak appears and the entity moves towards having a body plan.

Some five months later, the answer came back: they did, said the agency, because of their theoretical potential to develop a primitive streak. As a result, the same limits that apply to research on real embryos would apply to blastoids. It was a devastating setback, says Polo. His team had to get a specific embryo licence, which bars the group from growing blastoids to study later stages of gastrulation and organogenesis. "I think that they made a mistake," says Polo about the agency's ruling.

Some definitions focus on the embryo's potential to form or become something else. The ISSCR has said that, based on their potential, embryo models cannot be considered to be embryos, and most countries take a similar view.

Some have proposed revising regulations concerning real embryos to cover some types of embryo model. In the Netherlands, says Nienke, a scientific advisory body proposed a ban on growing the models beyond the equivalent of 28 days in real-embryo terms. France is considering the same limit. Researchers in the United Kingdom did something a little different in July: they published voluntary guidelines for embryo models that do not set fixed limits on how long they can be cultured. The guidelines could eventually lead to the passing of binding legislation — as happened with similar voluntary UK guidelines around embryo research several decades ago.

Science accelerates

Meanwhile, the science keeps moving at such a pace that regulators have a lot to keep up with. In June 2024, the ISSCR announced that it had set up a working group to assess the state of the science and review earlier guidelines, in light of the models published since 2021.

The one by Zernicka-Goetz's group7 doesn't have cells that behave like trophoblasts, which provide nutrition for the embryo — and although Hanna's8 does contain a trophoblast-like layer, it isn't as organized as the real thing, say researchers.

Some researchers try to avoid this ethical dilemma by intentionally introducing changes to their embryo models that would make it impossible for the model to result in an organism. For example, Hanna has started working on models in which genes involved in brain and heart development have been inactivated. He has inferred from discussions with Christian and Jewish leaders in his community that an embryo model lacking brain or heart tissue would not be considered a form of person.

Organ making

At about three weeks, the embryo starts the momentous organ-growing process that lasts more than a month. Several teams have homed in on aspects of this organogenesis, growing models that resemble only pieces of the embryo — this has potentially fewer ethical constraints than modelling the whole structure.

When is it an embryo?

Most researchers agree that today's human embryo models are nowhere near the real thing. The key challenge for researchers who are developing guidelines is determining "when an embryo model would be considered equivalent to an embryo", says Amander Clark, a developmental and stem-cell biologist at the University of California, Los Angeles, who co-chairs the ISSCR's working group on embryo models.

—Courtesy, Nature

LETTERS Write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساڈھ

Renaming Port Blair evokes mixed reactions

The renaming of Port Blair to Sri Vijaya Puram has evoked mixed reactions among its residents, with many describing the move as meaningless, while another section maintaining that it was a necessary step to erase "colonial imprints".

Union Home Minister Amit Shah had on Friday announced that Port Blair, the capital city of the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, has been renamed Sri Vijaya Puram.

"While the earlier name had a colonial legacy, Sri Vijaya Puram symbolises the victory achieved in India's freedom struggle and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands' unique role in it," he had said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, too, had hailed the renaming of Port Blair and said it reflects the government's commitment to break free from the colonial mindset and "celebrate our heritage".

However, several residents of the Union territory criticised the decision.

Rakesh Pal Gobind, president of the Local Born Association (LBA), claimed that the renaming took place without any consultation with the group and other locals.

"With great surprise, we got to know through news channels that the Union home minister has renamed Port Blair to Sri Vijaya Puram. We, the islanders, particularly those from the penal settlements, are deeply shocked as we were not consulted about this decision," he said.

"The sacrifice and commitment of our forefathers, who were brought here as prisoners in 1858, seem to have been disregarded. The government should have sought suggestions before taking the decision. It feels like a dictatorship rather than a democratic process. I urge the home minister and prime minister to reconsider the move and respect the feelings of the islanders," Gobind said.

A lot of residents asserted that the renaming lacked historical relevance
PHOTO: X

Another elderly resident, Amir Ali, 87, viewed the decision as an "insult" to his ancestors, who sacrificed their lives during the freedom struggle.

"The central government has renamed the city without consultation," he said.

Historians noted that the Andaman and Nicobar Islands were used as a strategic naval base by the 11th-century Chola emperor Rajendra I to launch an attack on Srivijaya (now Indonesia).

"The Chola dynasty, originating from southern India, ruled a vast maritime empire. The Cholas used the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as a base to attack the Srivijaya Empire. The islands were referred to as 'Nakkavaram' in the Thanjavur inscription of 1,050 AD during Rajendra Chola I's rule," historian Pronob Sircar said.

"The harbour region was known as 'Old Harbour' until it was renamed Port Blair by Frederick John Mouat, president of the Andaman Committee, on April 4, 1858, in honour of British surveyor Archibald Blair," he noted.

A few other residents asserted that the renaming lacked historical relevance.

TSG Bhasker, a well-known trader in Port Blair, said it could have been named after any of the freedom fighters and unsung heroes of that time to honour them.

"It is unfortunate that the central government seems to be disregarding our opinions," he said.

Meanwhile, welcoming the move, BJP MP from Andaman and Nicobar Islands Bishnu Pada Ray said the renaming was much needed.

"The renaming of Port Blair was very much needed as the previous name reminded us of the slavery during the British rule," Ray said.

—PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, too, had hailed the renaming of Port Blair and said it reflects the government's commitment to break free from the colonial mindset
PHOTO: PTI

Endometriosis leads to missed school and work in 2/3rd of women: Study

More than two-thirds of women with endometriosis missed school or work due to pain from the condition, in a study of more than 17,000 women between the ages of 15 and 44 in the U.S. That is a key finding of new research published in the Journal of Endometriosis and Uterine Disorders.

Our study also found that Black and Hispanic women were less likely to be diagnosed with endometriosis compared with white women. Interestingly, women who identified as part of the LGBTQ community had a higher likelihood of receiving an endometriosis diagnosis than heterosexual women.

We used data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, which is administered by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, for the period 2011 to 2019. The survey data use adjusted weights to account for the racial composition of U.S. society, meaning our sample of 17,619 women represents 51,981,323 women of the U.S. population.

We specifically examined factors related to quality of life, such as poverty, education and functional impairment, as well as race and sexual orientation.

I am a physician-scientist and a researcher in women's health, working together with specialists in OB-GYN from Yale and the University of Texas.

Why it matters

Endometriosis is a chronic, often painful condition that affects approximately 10% of reproductive-age women worldwide. It occurs when tissues that would normally line the inner surface of the uterus instead occur outside the uterus, such as on the ovaries or even in distant organs such as the lungs or brain. These abnormally located lesions respond to hormonal changes during the menstrual cycle, causing pain when stimulated by the hormones that regulate the menstrual cycle.

Our study sheds light on how endometriosis, despite its prevalence, remains underdiagnosed and underresearched. We found that 6.4% of reproductive-age women in the U.S. had an endometriosis diagnosis. More than 67% reported missed work or school, or having been unable to perform daily activities, due to pain associated with endometriosis.

Our study highlights disparities in the diagnosis and management of endometriosis among different racial groups. Black women had 63% lower odds of getting an endometriosis diagnosis, and Hispanic women had 55% lower odds compared with non-Hispanic white women. This disparity may reflect historical biases in health care, pointing to the need for more equitable practices.

Endometriosis is a chronic, often painful condition that affects approximately 10% of reproductive-age women worldwide. It occurs when tissues that would normally line the inner surface of the uterus instead occur outside the uterus, such as on the ovaries or even in distant organs
PHOTO: FREEPIK

In addition, our study underscores the importance of considering women's health across diverse population subgroups, with particular attention to sexual orientation. We found that non-heterosexual lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer women had 54% higher odds of receiving an endometriosis diagnosis compared with straight women. Our study was the first to examine endometriosis likelihood among non-heterosexual women at the national level in the US.

We found no significant association between endometriosis and other quality-of-life indicators such as poverty, education or employment status, which suggests that the condition affects women across various socioeconomic backgrounds.

What other research is being done

Our work adds to the growing body of evidence that Black women are less likely to be diagnosed with endometriosis and that their reported pain symptoms are often overlooked.

Explanations for this inequity include health care bias against minority women and limited access to medical care among Black women. Research also shows that many medical professionals as well as medical students and residents believe that Black women have a lower pain threshold compared with the white population.

- This is another possible reason that pain symptoms among Black women with endometriosis get neglected. Researchers from the UK reported the same findings, attributing these disparities to systemic bias and inequitable medical care

This is another possible reason that pain symptoms among Black women with endometriosis get neglected. Researchers from the UK reported the same findings, attributing these disparities to systemic bias and inequitable medical care.

Another study estimates that the lifetime costs associated with having endometriosis are about US $27,855 per year per patient in the US, costing the country about $22 billion annually on health care expenditures.

—The Conversation

Alarm in UK, US over possible Iran-Russia nuclear deal

LONDON, 15 SEPT

Britain and the US have raised fears that Russia has shared nuclear secrets with Iran in return for Tehran supplying Moscow with ballistic missiles to bomb Ukraine.

During their summit in Washington DC on Friday, Keir Starmer and US President Joe Biden acknowledged that the two countries were tightening military cooperation at a time when Iran is in the process of enriching enough uranium to complete its long-held goal to build a nuclear bomb.

On Tuesday last week, Antony Blinken, the US Secretary of State, made a similar warning on a visit to London for a summit with his British counterpart, David Lammy, though it received little attention, as the focus then was the US announcement of Iran's missile supply to Moscow.

"For its part, Russia is sharing technology that Iran seeks – this is a two-way street – including on nuclear issues as well as some space information," Blinken said, accusing the two countries of engaging in destabilising activities that sow "even greater insecurity" around the world.

- Iran had struck a deal in 2015 to halt making nuclear weapons in exchange for sanctions relief with the US and other western nations

Britain, France and Germany jointly warned last week that Iran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium had "continued to grow significantly, without any credible civilian justification" and that it had accumulated four "significant quantities" that each could be used to make a nuclear bomb.

Iran had struck a deal in 2015 to halt making nuclear weapons in exchange for sanctions relief with the US and other western nations – only for the agreement to be abandoned in 2018 by then US president and current Republican nominee Donald Trump.

—Courtesy, The Guardian

US State Secretary Antony Blinken said Russia is sharing technology that Iran seeks, in Washington on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

MISSILES FROM YEMEN LAND IN CENTRAL ISRAEL

Houthi official says 20 interceptors failed to hit the missile

JERUSALEM, 15 SEPT

A missile fired from Yemen landed in an open area in central Israel early Sunday, the Israeli military said, in the latest reverberation from the nearly yearlong war in Gaza.

Nasruddin Amer, the deputy head of the media office for Yemen's Houthi rebels, says in a post on X that a missile fired from Yemen reached Israel after "20 missiles failed to intercept" it, describing the attack as the "beginning."

The early morning attack triggered air raid sirens, including at Israel's international airport, where local media aired footage of people racing to shelters. There were no reports of casualties or damage, and the airport authority said operations resumed as normal shortly thereafter.

A fire could be seen in a rural area of central Israel, and local media showed images of what appeared to be a fragment from a missile or x that landed on an escalator in a train station in the central town of Modiin. The military said the sound of explosions in the area came from interceptors.

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels have repeatedly fired drones and missiles toward Israel since the start of the war in Gaza between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas, but nearly all of them have been intercepted over the Red Sea.

A police officer inspects the area around a fire after the a missile launched from Yemen lands in central Israel **PHOTO: PTI**

The Houthis have also repeatedly attacked commercial shipping in the Red Sea, in what the rebels portray as a blockade on Israel in support of the Palestinians. Most of the targeted ships have no connection to Israel.

The war in Gaza, which began with Hamas' 7 October attack into southern Israel, has rippled across the region, with Iran and allied militant groups attacking Israeli and US targets and drawing retaliatory strikes from Israel and its Western allies. On several occasions, the strikes and counterstrikes have threatened to trigger a wider conflict.

Iran supports militant groups across the region, including Hamas, the Houthis and Lebanon's Hezbollah, its most powerful ally, which has traded fired with Israel on a near-daily basis since the war in Gaza began. Iran and its allies say they are acting in solidarity with the Palestinians. *—AP*

Border flare-up: Hezbollah warns Israel

PALESTINE, 15 SEPT

Hezbollah's deputy leader has warned Israel that a full-scale war on Lebanon would cause "large losses on both sides" and displace hundreds of thousands of more Israelis in the country's north. Naim Qassem's comments on Saturday came as Israel's Channel 13 reported that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was "on the verge" of launching a "broad and strong operation" on the country's northern border with Lebanon. Hezbollah and Israel have been trading near-daily fire across the border since Israel launched its war on Gaza. *—Al Jazeera*

COMBAT ADVANTAGE

NATO backs Ukraine using long-range weapons on Russia

PRAGUE, 14 SEPT

The head of NATO's military committee said on Saturday that Ukraine has the solid legal and military right to strike deep inside Russia to gain combat advantage — reflecting the beliefs of a number of US allies — even as the Biden administration balks at allowing Kyiv to do so using American-made weapons.

"Every nation that is attacked has the right to defend itself. And that right doesn't stop at the border of your own nation," said Adm Rob Bauer, speaking at the close of the committee's annual meeting, also attended by US Gen CQ Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Bauer, of Netherlands, also added that nations have the sovereign right to put limits on the weapons they send to Ukraine. But, standing next to him at a press briefing, Lt Gen Karel Rehka, chief of the General Staff of the Czech Armed Forces, made it clear his nation places no such weapons restrictions on Kyiv

Their comments came as US President Joe Biden is weighing whether to allow Ukraine to use American-provided long-range weapons to hit deep into Russia. And they hint at the divisions over the issue. *—AP*

PHOTO: X

2 die in missile attack in Ukraine's Odesa

KYIV, 15 SEPT

Two people died in a missile attack on the Ukrainian Black Sea port city of Odesa, local officials said, as Moscow and Kyiv exchanged drone and missile attacks. The Ukrainian air force said on Sunday it shot down 10 of the 14 drones and one of the three missiles Russia launched overnight, while the rest hit the suburbs of Odesa. Meanwhile, Russian Defence Ministry said it downed 29 Ukrainian drones overnight into Sunday. *—AP*

AHEAD OF ELECTION

More bomb threats in Ohio after Trump's false claims on Haitian

OHIO, 15 SEPT

Two hospitals in Springfield, Ohio, were sent into lockdown after bomb threats, police said Saturday, marking the fourth such case in as many days that appears linked to false claims circulating among the far right that Haitian immigrants there are eating domestic pets and wildlife.

Saturday's threats came even after the woman who started the rumors acknowledged to NBC News that they were unfounded and publicly apologized. Kettering Health Springfield was one of the medical facilities targeted, with officials later saying they found nothing suspicious during a search.

An official said the hospital has continued to operate and thanked Springfield police as well as hospital staff "for their swift, & caring response".

—Courtesy, The Guardian

US VOWS TO HELP BANGLADESH EXPAND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

DHAKA, 15 SEPT

The United States on Sunday assured Bangladesh's interim government of its commitment to helping the country expand economic opportunities, build institutional capacity, and uphold human rights.

The US commitment came as a high-level US delegation met Foreign Adviser Md Touhid Hossain. The US delegation at the meeting was headed by Assistant Secretary for International Finance of the US Department of Treasury Brent Neiman. The delegation also included US State Department Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Donald Lu, The Daily Star newspaper said.

Neiman also met Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed.

After the meeting, the embassy said: "We support Bangladesh's path towards renewed dynamism and growth. Our engagement with top economic policymakers centred on the authorities' efforts to propel economic growth, job creation, and sustainability, including through engaging with international financial institutions."

In a separate incident, a fresh case has been filed against Bangladesh's ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 58 others on the charges of attempting to murder a student during the violent clashes that led to the fall of her government last month. *—AP*

8 killed while trying to cross English Channel: France

NICE, 15 SEPT

At least eight people died during a failed attempt to cross the English Channel from northern France, French maritime authorities said on Sunday. The incident occurred Saturday just before midnight when authorities spotted a boat, carrying dozens, in distress near a beach in the northern town of Ambleteuse.

A French rescue ship was deployed to the area and rescue services offered medical assistance to 53 migrants on the beach, a statement from the French maritime authorities in charge of the Channel and the North Sea said.

"Despite the emergency care provided, eight people have died," the statement said. No people were discovered during the search at sea, it added. Six people were taken to hospital "in relative emergency," including a 10-month-old baby with hypothermia, Jacques Billant, the Pas-de-Calais prefect, told French media on Sunday. He said survivors of the accident come from Eritrea, Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Egypt and Iran.

A French rescue ship was deployed to the area **PHOTO: AL JAZEERA**

Survivors of the tragedy have been taken to the sports hall in Ambleteuse, according to a statement from the prefecture of Pas-de-Calais region. Prosecutor's office in Boulogne-sur-mer has opened an investigation into the accident. British officials were quick to express sadness over another English Channel incident. "It's awful," Foreign Secretary David Lammy told BBC. "It's a further loss of life."

The new Labour Party government has pledged to crack down on criminal gangs plying the channel trade and had discussed with European partners "how we go after those gangs, in co-operation upstream." *—AP*

MASSIVE FLOODS

Thousands evacuate Czech Republic

PRAGUE, 15 SEPT

Thousands of people have been evacuated from the eastern region of Moravia in the Czech Republic due to floods, and more than 2,60,000 are now without power.

Storm Boris has swept by central and eastern Europe with rainfalls rising river levels and causing flash floods in dozens of areas across the country. In the Czech Republic, the most eastern region of Moravian-Silesia endured the worst power-cut, as 1,14,000 customers were affected.

Large parts of Krnov town, including the centre, were underwater. "We won't know the extent of the damage until daylight, but there are no reports of injuries or casualties," said city spokesperson Dita Círová. The Opava River has risen from one metre to nearly five metres, with a third-level flood alert in effect.

According to the officials at least 2,60,000 are without power in Czech Republic on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

On Saturday, in the second biggest city of Brno, more than 180 patients were evacuated from the Brothers of Mercy Hospital to other facilities, according to the hospital management.

Strong winds caused trees and branches to fall onto power lines downing several utility poles. Several towns and villages have been affected, including the village of Mikulovice in the north-east, which hosts around 2,500 inhabitants and has seen its houses and roads flooded.

China activates emergency response to flooding

China's Ministry of Water Resources issued a Level-IV emergency response to flooding on Saturday for Shanghai and the provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui.

Strong rainfall from the approaching Typhoon Bebinca is expected to impact China's southeastern regions. The ministry forecasts that water levels in some medium and minor rivers in these areas may exceed warning thresholds. According to the Ministry of Emergency Management, Typhoon Bebinca is expected to make landfall along the coast from Taizhou City in Zhejiang to Qidong City in Jiangsu between Sunday night and Monday morning, bringing heavy rain. *—Courtesy: CGTN and Euro News*

6 foreigners held for 'plot' to kill Venezuela President

BOGOTA, 15 SEPT

Three Americans, two Spaniards and a Czech citizen were arrested on Saturday after Venezuelan officials accused them of coming to the South American country to assassinate President Nicolas Maduro.

The foreign citizens were part of a CIA-led plot to overthrow the Venezuelan government and kill members of its leadership, said Diosdado Cabello, the nation's powerful interior minister. In a television programme, Cabello showed images of rifles that he said were confiscated from some of the plotters of the alleged plan.

The arrest of the American citizens included a member of the Navy, who Cabello identified as Wilbert Joseph Castañeda Gomez. Cabello said Gomez was a navy seal who had served in Afghanistan, Iraq and Colombia. Spain's embassy in Venezuela did not reply to a request for comment on the arrests of its citizens.

- The arrest of the American citizens included a member of the Navy, who Cabello identified as Wilbert Joseph Castaeda Gomez. Cabello said Gomez was a navy seal who had served in Afghanistan, Iraq and Colombia

The US State Department late Saturday confirmed the detention of a US military member and said it was aware of "unconfirmed reports of two additional US citizens detained in Venezuela". "Any claims of US involvement in a plot to overthrow Maduro are categorically false. The United States continues to support a democratic solution to the political crisis in Venezuela," the statement said. *—AP*

PHOTO: X

'Shogun' tops the queue as Emmys today

LOS ANGELES, 15 SEPT

'Shogun' could be in for an epic night, 'The Bear' could clean up for the second time in less than a year, and 'Baby Reindeer' has gone from dark horse to contender as the 76th Primetime Emmy Awards arrive on Sunday. Back in their traditional mid-September spot after a single strike-delayed edition in January, the Emmys will air live on ABC from the Peacock Theater in downtown Los Angeles. The father and son duo of Eugene and Dan Levy, the winning stars of the 2020 Emmys with their show "Schitt's Creek", will host. Here's a look at how the evening could play out across the major categories. Who's nominated for drama series at the Emmys: It may be impossible to slow the roll of "Shogun". *—AP*

ADB asks Pak to adopt Indian plan on education

ISLAMABAD, 15 SEPT

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has advised Pakistan to adopt India's scheme ULLAS to fix its dysfunctional education system and impart quality training to its citizens, according to a media report. The Manila-based lender's recommendation came in response to Pakistan's request for financial support to improve its education system and impart education to all out-of-school children, The Express Tribune newspaper said. The Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society (ULLAS) was launched by the Government of India in July last year to help non-literates and adults who missed out on formal schooling. The ADB recommends that the government adopt a strategic and multi-stakeholder consultative approach, drawing on international best practices, such as the government of India's new centrally sponsored scheme "ULLAS", according to the lender. *—PTI*

Lightning strike kills 5 family members in Pak

PESHAWAR, 15 SEPT

Five members of a family, including a woman, were killed when a fire broke out after lightning struck a mud house in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, according to rescue officials. The incident occurred on Saturday in the Mardan district of the province. Firefighters rushed to the site after receiving information about the incident and extinguished the blaze, officials of the emergency service Rescue 1122 said. The bodies of the five family members were shifted to a hospital. The house, built in a mountainous area, served as an accommodation for the devotees of a nearby shrine, according to the officials. *—PTI*

Mission possible: Billionaire returns after spacewalk

CAPE CANAVERAL, 15 SEPT

A billionaire spacewalker returned to Earth with his crew on Sunday, ending a five-day trip that lifted them higher than anyone has travelled since NASA's moonwalkers. SpaceX's capsule splashed down in the Gulf of Mexico near Florida's Dry Tortugas in the predawn darkness, carrying tech entrepreneur Jared Isaacman, two SpaceX engineers and a former Air Force Thunderbird pilot. They pulled off the first private spacewalk while orbiting nearly 740 kilometres above Earth, higher than the International Space Station and Hubble Space Telescope. Their spacecraft hit a peak altitude of 1,408 kilometres following Tuesday's liftoff. Isaacman became only the 264th person to perform a spacewalk since the former Soviet Union scored the first in 1965, and SpaceX's Sarah Gillis the 265th. *—AP*

Goa to build new cruise terminal to boost tourism

PANAJI, 15 SEPT

With a 40 per cent rise in cruise passengers in FY 2023-24, the Mormugao Port Authority (MPA) expects to grow it further with the construction of the International and Domestic Cruise Terminal in Goa by March 2025, an official said. The development of the International and Domestic Cruise Terminal and allied facilities is expected to boost tourism and local economy while fostering sustainable practices and infrastructure improvements, thereby enhancing the region's competitiveness in the global cruise market, the senior MPA official told PTI. In the 2023-24 financial year, there was an increase in calls by cruise vessels by 15 per cent and and rise in cruise passengers by 40 per cent compared to FY 2022-23, he said. The official said the focus would be on passengers in new facility. The international cruise terminal will have 24 immigration counters, 10 check-in counters, a waiting lounge and other facilities, he said. *—PTI*

India audio device market hits ₹5,000cr sales

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

The Indian audio devices market is experiencing "remarkable growth" as offline retail sales hit Rs 5,000 crore moving annual turnover (MAT) in June 2024, driven by a 61 per cent YoY volume growth in the Personal Audio segment, according to a report from GfK. Growth is driven by the rise in immersive sound technologies, enhanced consumer experiences, and a growing demand for high-quality audio products across both home and personal categories, it said. Moreover, a shift towards premiumisation in the category as consumers look towards superior quality and immersive audio experiences also aiding the Indian audio device market. Indian consumers have a "massive appetite" for audio devices and are seeking a cinematic experience and convenient listening. *—PTI*

MoS to be convenor of GoM on GST compensation cess

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

The Group of Ministers on reworking the nomenclature for GST compensation cess is likely to be convened by Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary and include members from states, an official has said. The official further said the Terms of Reference (ToR) and the members of the GoM are in the process of getting finalised. The members of the Group of Ministers (GoM) on GST compensation cess are in the process of being decided. But, since the issue is with regard to cess, which is collected by the Centre, and its apportionment, the GoM would have a member from the Centre as well, the official explained. Generally, the senior-most member of the GoM is made its convenor. So, the Union Minister of State for Finance is likely to be the convenor of the GoM on GST compensation cess, the official told *—PTI*

HDFC to boost income of 5 lakh marginal farmers

VARANASI, 15 SEPT

The country's biggest private sector lender HDFC Bank looks to increase the income of 5 lakh marginal farmers earning less than Rs 60,000 annually by 2025, as part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative, Parivartan. "The bank's focus on rural development reflects our continued commitment to fostering sustainable growth and uplifting vulnerable communities. Since its inception in 2014, Parivartan has grown into one of India's largest CSR programmes, active in 28 states and 8 Union Territories," HDFC Bank Deputy Managing Director Kaizad M Bharucha said. Launched in 2014, HDFC Bank 'Parivartan' was established with the vision to contribute to the socio-economic development of communities across India.*—PTI*

Adani wins bid to supply 6,600 MW electricity to M'rashtra

Bid is a rupee lower than the cost of current procurement

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

Adani group has won a bid to supply 6,600 MW of bundled renewable and thermal power to Maharashtra for the long term after its quote of Rs 4.08 per unit beat the likes of JSW Energy and Torrent Power.

Adani Power's bid for the bundled renewable and thermal energy supply for 25 years was almost a rupee lower than the cost at which Maharashtra currently procures electricity and will help meet future electricity requirements of the state, two sources with direct knowledge of the matter said.

Supplies are to start in 48 months from the date of award of the letter of intent. Later, the Adani group, in a statement, confirmed the PTI news break. "Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company (MSEDCL) issues a letter of intent for 6,600 MW to Adani Power."

While Adani Power will supply 1,496 MW (net) thermal power from the new 1,600 MW ultra-supercritical capacity, its sister concern Adani Green Energy Ltd will supply 5 GW (5,000 MW) solar power from the Khavda renewable energy park in the Kutch district of Gujarat.

At Rs4.08 per unit Adani Energy beats JSW and Torrent *PHOTO: PTI*

- Adani group has won a bid to supply 6,600 MW of bundled renewable and thermal power to Maharashtra for the long term after its quote of Rs 4.08 per unit beat the likes of JSW Energy and Torrent Power

As per the bid conditions, Adani Green Energy will supply solar power at a fixed cost of Rs 2.70 per unit throughout the entire supply period, while that from coal will be indexed to coal prices.

Adani Power Limited, India's largest private thermal power producer, "will sign a long-term Power Supply Agreement with MSEDCL for the supply of 1,496 MW (net) thermal power to Maharashtra state from a new 1600 MW ultra-supercritical thermal power project", it added.

The statement, however, did not detail the tariff bid to win the tender. MSEDCL, in March, floated a unique tender for sourcing 5,000 MW of electricity generated from sunlight and 1,600 MW of power generated from coal.

Its bid compares to Rs 4.36 per unit quoted by the second lowest bidder, JSW Energy, and Rs 4.70 per unit average procurement cost of Maharashtra last year. The tariff is about Re 1 per unit lower than the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission (MERC) approved average power purchase cost of Rs 4.97 per kWh (unit) for 2024-25.

According to sources, MSEDCL designed the tender in a way to get equal energy weightage to solar and thermal components. 5,000 MW of solar power equals 1,600 MW of thermal electricity in terms of capacity utilisation factor (CUF). The ratio between thermal and renewable power is 1:3. Adani Power, India's largest private-sector thermal power generator, has a generation capacity in excess of 17 GW, which is rising to 31 GW by 2030. *—PTI*

CASH NEEDS

RBI to revamp currency mgmt infra

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

The Reserve Bank plans to comprehensively revamp its currency management infrastructure over the next 4-5 years, mainly to ensure adequate storage and handling capacity to cater to the future cash needs of the growing economy.

The creation of greenfield currency management centres, the introduction of warehouse automation, the installation of security and surveillance systems, an inventory management system, and a centralised command centre are being mooted to modernise the existing infrastructure, according to an RBI document.

"Despite moderation in the growth rate of NIC (Notes In Circulation) in the last three years, analysis indicates that the growth will continue to be positive over the foreseeable future though the pace thereof is expected to be slower over the next decade," the document said. Further, the central bank said the trend in volume growth is expected to continue, and the rate may even accelerate, such that the value needs of the public are met sufficiently yet conveniently.

Notes in Circulation (NIC), in volume and value terms, have increased considerably over the past two decades. NIC volume stood at 136.21 billion pieces (bpcs) on 31 March, 2023, and 146.87 bpcs as of 31 March, 2024. Coins in Circulation (CIC) have also increased in terms of volume and value.

CIC volume stood at 127.92 bpcs as of March 31, 2023 and 132.35 bpcs as of March 31, 2024. "Thus, the current currency management infrastructure needs modernisation to ensure adequate capacities (factoring future needs), optimisation, as also making the process safer and environment friendly," the RBI said. The banknotes are printed at four printing presses, and coins are minted at four mints. The new banknotes and coins are received at nineteen Issue Offices (IOs) across the country, from where they are further distributed to about 2,800 Currency Chests (CCs) operated by scheduled banks. *—PTI*

Reliance expands trading area for non-food sector

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

Reliance Retail, the country's largest retailer, has increased the trading area for non-food and general merchandise by almost 50 per cent in its grocery stores in a bid to improve margins.

The move is also likely to bolster the retailer's hyper-local aspirations through its e-commerce platform Jiomart, through which it is connecting its Smart and Smart Bazaar stores providing a wider variety to consumers, according to an industry insider.

As part of that Reliance Retail is now going for space revision at its stores, allocating higher trading areas for non-food and general merchandise items, a segment which offers higher margins than other segments such as grocery and apparel.

The extended retail space would not only allow Reliance Retail to offer a complete range of products for a segment but also fill in the gaps in its offerings, the source said. An e-mail sent to Reliance Retail seeking comments on the development remained unanswered by the time of filing the story.

PHOTO: PTI

Besides, it will also help compete with the growing quick-commerce platforms through its "hyper-local model under Jiomart, where it is investing in enhancements to the technology platform, supply chain capabilities and distribution capabilities.

During its latest June quarter earnings calls, Reliance management had said it is "streamlining of operations which is driving the margin improvement." Even in its latest annual report, Reliance Retail had said focus on range expansion across non-food categories remains a "key priority". *—PTI*

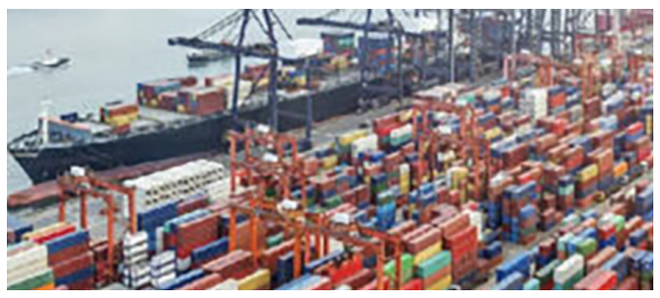
FOR SHIPBUILDING

India seeks investments and tech transfer from South Korea Japan

GOA, 15 SEPT

India is seeking investments and technology transfer from South Korea and Japan to establish shipbuilding and ship repair clusters to promote the domestic shipping supply chain in the country, according to a senior government official. Currently, India holds less than 1 per cent of the global shipbuilding market, dominated by China, South Korea, and Japan. "We are looking at South Korea and Japan for investments and technology transfer for establishing shipbuilding and ship repair clusters in India," TK Ramachandran, Secretary in Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), told a group of journalists here.

Ramachandran was in Goa to participate in the 20th Maritime State Development Council (MSDC), where plans for a mega shipbuilding park, spanning multiple states, were discussed. Ramachandran also said that Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal has written to chief ministers of all states to provide land immediately if Japanese or Korean companies express interest in setting up shipbuilding and ship repair clusters in their states.



Currently, India holds less than 1 per cent of the global shipbuilding market, dominated by China *PHOTO: PTI*

This ambitious initiative aims to consolidate shipbuilding capabilities across regions, fostering greater efficiency and innovation.Ramachandran said India's proposed Rs 25,000 crore Maritime Development Fund which looks at providing long-term, low-cost financial support and push towards indigenous ship-building -- will be basically equity funding.

While pointing out that currently, 95 per cent of India's foreign trade happens through foreign-owned and foreign-flagged vessels, which results in an outgo of USD 110 billion annually from India, Ramachandran said almost 60 per cent of the country's ship repair work happens outside the country. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

90% of financial institutes focusing on AI, GenAI: PwC

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

Ninety per cent of Indian financial institutions are focusing on artificial intelligence (AI) and GenAI (Generative Artificial Intelligence) as the primary technology enablers of innovation, according to a PwC India report.

As per the PwC India report titled, 'Mapping the FinTech innovation landscape in India' data analytics also continues to emerge prominently across nearly 74 per cent responses, underscoring its integral role in driving insights and decision-making within the financial services (FS) sector. It said that 31 financial institutions consisting of banks, insurance firms and fintechs participated in the survey.

Further, 84 per cent of respondents stated that customer experience and engagement - acquisition, onboarding and servicing was the key area of focus for innovation initiatives. Additionally, over 50 per cent of the participants highlighted product distribution as a key area of innovation.

It can also be noted that the frequent references to risk management, operations and regulatory compliance across several responses highlight the sector's diligence in maintaining robust governance frameworks amidst ongoing technological advancements, the report said.

As the fintech industry continues to evolve, it's clear that growth must be balanced with the critical challenges of digital security and regulatory compliance, Mihir Gandhi, Partner and Payments Transformation Leader, PwC India, said. *—PTI*

USFDA PULLS UP ZYDUS FOR MANUFACTURING LAPSES

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

The US health regulator has pulled up Zydus Lifesciences for manufacturing lapses at its Gujarat-based plant.

In a warning letter to company's Managing Director Sharvil Patel, the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) noted that the drug maker failed to investigate contamination identified in drug products at its Jarod-based plant in Vadodara district.

The USFDA said it inspected the manufacturing facility from 15 to 23 April, 2024.

"This warning letter summarises significant violations of current good manufacturing practice (CGMP) regulations for finished pharmaceuticals," it added. It further said: "Because your methods, facilities, or controls for manufacturing, processing, packing, or holding do not conform to CGMP, your drug products are adulterated."

The USFDA said it inspected the manufacturing facility from 15 to 23 April, 2024 *PHOTO: PTI*

Elaborating on the manufacturing issues at the facility, USFDA noted: "Your firm failed to thoroughly investigate any unexplained discrepancy or failure of a batch or any of its components to meet any of its specifications, whether or not the batch has already been distributed."

The US health regulator also pointed out that the company failed to adequately investigate and determine the root cause of glass particulate contamination in multiple batches of Cyanocobalamin Injection (USP 1000mcg/mL, 1mL). *—PTI*

JSW arm commissions 300 MW wind project

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

JSW Energy on Sunday announced that its step-down subsidiary, JSW Renew Energy Two Ltd, has successfully commissioned a 300 MW wind power plant at Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu.

The ISTS-connected (Inter-state transmission system) wind power project was awarded by Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) in tranche X, a company statement said. This marks the first-ever greenfield wind power plant commissioned by the company for the SECI, it noted.

The newly commissioned wind power project will contribute significantly to the renewable energy portfolio, supporting the vision of a greener and sustainable future, the company said. The additional 150 MW of wind capacity awarded under SECI Tranche X located at Dharapuram, Tamil Nadu, is also nearing completion with 138 MW already commissioned, it informed. Total current installed capacity stands at 7,726 MW while the under-construction capacity stands at 2,114 MW, that is expected to be commissioned by the end of FY 2025. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

US RATE CUT EXPECTED

FPIs inject ₹27,856 cr in equities in September

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

Foreign investors have infused Rs 27,856 crore in domestic equities in the first fortnight this month, owing to the resilience of the Indian market and growing optimism around the potential interest rate cut in the US.

Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have been consistently buying equities since June. Before that, they pulled out Rs 34,252 crore in April-May.

With the focus shifting to the US Federal Reserve's decision on interest rates in its upcoming FOMC meeting next week, its outcome will likely play a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of future FPIs investments in Indian equities, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director- Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have been consistently buying equities

According to the data with the depositories, FPIs put in a net investment of Rs 27,856 crore into equities this month (till September 13).

With this, FPIs' investment in equities reached Rs 70,737 crore so far this year.

VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, has attributed two major reasons for FPIs' strong buying. First, there is a consensus now that the US Fed will start cutting rates from this month onwards, pushing the US yields down.

Recent data showing US inflation cooling for the fifth consecutive month, hitting a 43-month low of 2.5 per cent year-on-year in August, has strengthened expectations that the US Federal Reserve may proceed with a rate cut at its upcoming policy meeting. Apart from equities, FPIs invested Rs 7,525 crore in debt through the voluntary retention route in the first two weeks of September and Rs 14,805 crore in government debt securities designated under the Fully Accessible Route (FAR). *—PTI*

9 out of 10 most valued Mcap firms jump ₹2 lakh cr

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

Nine of the top-10 most valued firms together added Rs 2,01,552.69 crore in market valuation last week, with Bharti Airtel stealing the show, amid bullish investors' sentiment in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,707.01 points or 2.10 per cent. The 30-share BSE Sensex hit its lifetime high of 83,116.19 on Thursday. Bharti Airtel's valuation jumped Rs 54,282.62 crore to Rs 9,30,490.20 crore, becoming the biggest gainer among the top-10 firms.

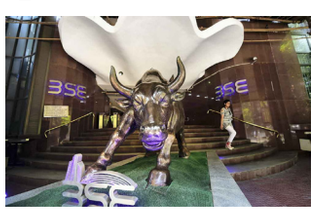


PHOTO: PTI

The market capitalisation (mcap) of ICICI Bank surged Rs 29,662.44 crore to Rs 8,80,867.09 crore. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) added Rs 23,427.12 crore taking its valuation to Rs 16,36,189.63 crore. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

First Pak woman nominated as int'l cricket umpire

ISLAMABAD, 15 SEP

Saleema Imtiaz became the first Pakistani woman to be nominated to the ICC international panel of development umpires, the Pakistan Cricket Board said on Sunday. Imtiaz's nomination on the panel means she is now eligible to officiate in women's bilateral international matches and ICC women's events. "This isn't just a win for me, it's a win for every aspiring female cricketer and umpire in Pakistan," Imtiaz said. "I hope my success motivates countless women who dream of making their mark in the sport. "This moment reflects the growing influence of women in cricket and the PCB's commitment to fostering that development."—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Shubman Gill set to be rested for Bangladesh T20Is

NEW DELHI, 15 SEP

India vice-captain Shubman Gill is among the prominent players who will be rested for the three-match T20I series against Bangladesh starting October 7 as part of BCCI's workload management policy. Gill, India's No.3 in Test matches, is a vital cog in the team's top order alongside Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, and Yashasvi Jaiswal and is expected to play all 10 Tests this season. Apart from Gill, a few more important players will also be rested keeping the the three-Test series against New Zealand in mind.—*PTI*

Davis Cup 2024: Argentina reaches final

PARIS, 15 SEPT

Argentina clinched a berth in the eight-team Davis Cup Final with a tense 3-0 win over Finland on Saturday. The Argentines have reached the quarterfinals in Malaga, Spain, in November for the first time in five years.They had to battle in Group D in Manchester after an opening loss to 2022 champion Canada. They beat host Britain on Friday and overcame a gritty Finland, a semifinalist last year but without its best player. Tomas Martin Etcheverry beat 703rd-ranked Eero Vasa 7-6 (5), 6-3, then Francisco Cerundolo outlasted Otto Virtanen 6-7 (4), 6-1, 6-0. Argentina needed the doubles, and Maximo Gonzalez and Andres Molteni delivered against Patrick Kaukovalta and Harri Heliovaara 6-7 (3), 6-4, 6-3.—*PTI*

K'taka, Haryana win in men's nat'l Jr Hockey C'ship

JALANDHAR, 15 SEPT

Haryana, Karnataka, and Punjab secured wins on day six of the 14th Hockey India Junior Men's National Championship here on Sunday. Andhra Pradesh and Delhi played out a 5-5 draw. In the first match, Haryana thrashed Rajasthan 6-1. Rohit Rana (2nd minute), Sunil Maan (11th), Sahil Ruhal (17th), and Ami Khasa (60th) scored one goal each, while Navraj Singh (7th, 37th) struck a brace for Haryana. Anurag Suthar (50th) scored the consolation goal for Rajasthan. In the second match, Karnataka also notched up a 6-1 win over Kerala with Aryan Uthappa Mt (6th, 35th) and Sunil P B (8th, 45th) scoring a couple of goals each. Vivek Ravi Bagade (22nd) and Dhanush Kaveriappa Ma (32nd) too scored one goal each, while in response, Anujith P (47th) scored the only goal for Kerala. —*PTI*

Spinners take 7 wkts as India A trounce India D

ANANTAPUR, 15 SEPT

Once play resumed after lunch on Day 4, India D needed 298 runs to win with six wickets in hand in their Duleep Trophy match against India A.

The task seemed highly improbable with only two sessions remaining on the final day. The deteriorating pitch brought the spin duo of Tanush Kotian and Shams Mulani into play, and they combined to take seven wickets, dismissing India D for 301.

Ricky Bhui delayed the inevitable with a stubborn hundred, but spinners Shams Mulani and Tanush Kotian eventually brought India D to their knees as India A walked away with an 186-run win in the Duleep Trophy match here on Sunday.Bhui, starting from overnight 44, made 113 (195b, 14x4, 3x6) but India D, overnight 62, were bundled out for 301, chasing 488.

Ricky Bhui leads India D's fight with gutsy hundred, Mulani won the Player of the Match award for his all-round heroics PHOTO: PTI

The victory enabled India A to stay in contention for the title with 6 points. But they will have to get a favorable result against table-toppers India C (9 points) in their next match here on September 19. India D, out of the title race after two successive defeats, will be up against second-placed India B, who have 7 points.

They managed to stitch two useful stands for two subsequent wickets – a 53 between Bhui and skipper Shreyas Iyer (41, 55b, 8x4) and a 62 between Bhui and Sanju Samson (40, 45b, 3x4, 3x6).But their stands were more about aggression, and the approach was fraught with danger on a pitch where spinners called the shots.Both Shreyas and Samson were cleaned up by Mulani, who was later adjudged player of the match.

A sharply turned one accounted for Shreyas while Samson failed to connect a pull as the ball disturbed the timber.While wickets were tumbling constantly at the other end, Bhui was a picture of confidence and brought up his century in 170 balls. It ended the fight of India D even as Kotian went on to add two more wickets Saurabh Kumar (22) and Harshit Rana (24).

Brief scores: India A: 290 and 380/3 declared beat India D: 183 and 301 all out in 82.2 overs (Ricky Bhui 113, Shreyas Iyer 41, Sanju Samson 40; Shams Mulani 3/117, Tanush Kotian 4/73) by 186 runs.

—*PTI*

NORTH LONDON DERBY

Gabriel's header earns Arsenal 1-0 win

LONDON, 15 SEPT

Gabriel's second-half header earned Arsenal a crucial 1-0 win at Tottenham Hotspur in a feisty north London derby on Sunday to keep pace with early Premier League leaders Manchester City.

Spurs started sharper, and David Raya was forced into early saves before Arsenal fought their way into the contest, although Jurrien Timber was perhaps fortunate to avoid a straight red card for a reckless challenge on Pedro Porro in the first half.

The game was breathless but low on quality in front of goal until Arsenal punished Spurs from a corner, Gabriel escaping from Cristian Romero and powering a header past Guglielmo Vicario from close range in the 64th minute.

Arsenal withstood some late pressure from Spurs to secure the win, which puts them on 10 points, two behind champions City ahead of their trip to the Etihad next Sunday, while Spurs have four points from four games.

Tottenham had started brightly but fit-again summer signing Dominic Solanke wasted a good early opportunity while David Raya kept out Dejan Kulusevski.

Gabriel's second-half header earned Arsenal a crucial 1-0 win PHOTO: PTI

The result sees Arsenal move up to second place, two points behind leaders Manchester City. Tottenham sit 13th with just four points from their opening four top-flight games.

Next up, Spurs travel to Coventry in the League Cup on Wednesday night before hosting Brentford in the Premier League on Saturday.

Arsenal are at Atalanta in the UEFA Champions League on Thursday and then visit Premier League champions Manchester City in a crunch encounter next Sunday.

—*AP*

Al-Muwallad hospitalised

DUBAI, 15 SEPT

Saudi Arabia football player Fahad Al-Muwallad is in intensive care after falling from a second-floor balcony while vacationing in Dubai. Dubai Police General Command said late Saturday that Al-Muwallad was "involved in an accident while on a short vacation in Dubai when he fell from the balcony of his second-floor home." The winger, who just turned 30 and currently plays for Saudi Arabian club Al-Shabab, played at the 2018 World Cup with Saudi Arabia.

—*PTI*

Ramkumar Ramanathan and N Sriram Balaji PHOTO: PTI

Ramkumar-Balaji pair loses must-win doubles

STOCKHOLM, 15 SEPT

Ramkumar Ramanathan and N Sriram Balaji could play well only in patches to lose the do-or-die doubles against Andre Goransson and Filip Bergevi as India succumbed to Sweden in the Davis Cup World Group I tie after conceding an unassailable 0-3 lead, here Sunday.

After losing both the singles on Saturday, India needed to win the third rubber to stay alive in the tie but Ramkumar and Balaji went down 3-6 4-6 in one hour and 19 minutes.

India's dismal record against Sweden in the Davis Cup continued as it was the team's sixth defeat in as many ties.

The reverse singles have been rendered inconsequential.

India will now compete next year in the playoffs to keep its place in World Group I.

The Indian pair had its first chance in game three in the opening set on Goransson's serve. Balaji and Ramkumar pocketed four straight points to earn a breakpoint but the home team averted the danger.

Ramkumar was, however, broken in the next game and Bergevi held his own to zoom to a commanding 5-2 lead.

Balaji served to stay in the set and managed to hold. The home team comfortably sealed the opening set with Bergevi holding at love.

In the second set, Ramkumar had a fiery start, holding at love.

Bergevi though surprisingly struggled with his first serve as he committed two double faults to be at 30-all. —*PTI*

Hamilton to start Azerbaijan GP

BAKU, 15 SEPT

Seven-time Formula 1 champion Lewis Hamilton will start the Azerbaijan Grand Prix from the pit lane after changing his engine and other key parts following qualifying.

Hamilton had been due to start Sunday's race seventh before Mercedes installed a fifth engine of the season, above Hamilton's allowance, along with a new turbocharger and both components of the hybrid power system.

Hamilton's demotion raises title challenger Lando Norris to 15th on the grid as the McLaren driver seeks to make up ground for standings leader Max Verstappen of Red Bull, who starts sixth.

Norris initially qualified 17th but gained a place earlier when Pierre Gasly was disqualified because his Alpine car broke fuel flow rules.

The other Alpine driver, Esteban Ocon, will also start from the pit lane after replacing his engine and other parts. Ocon had placed last in qualifying.

—*PTI*

Chopra finishes 2nd in DL final, misses crown by 1cm

BRUSSELS, 15 SEPT

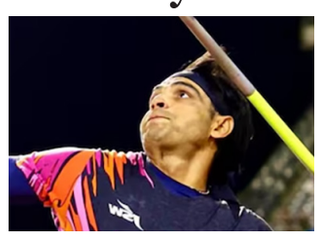
Star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra came agonizingly close to winning the Diamond League crown before missing it by just one centimeter to finish as runner-up for the second consecutive year with a throw of 87.86m in the season finale here.

The 26-year-old Chopra, who had won the DL trophy in 2022 before finishing second last year, achieved his best throw of the day in his third attempt but that was 1cm short of eventual winner Anderson Peters' 87.87m effort on Saturday.

Grenada's Peters, a two-time world champion, produced his best throw of the day in his opening attempt. Julian Weber of Germany was third with 85.97m.

Chopra, who added a silver to his Olympic medal tally in Paris following a historic gold at the Tokyo Games, thus ended his season on a high.

The Indian javelin throw superstar, who has a personal best of 89.94m and season's best of 89.49m, had a series of 86.82m, 83.49m, 87.86m, 82.04m, 83.30m and 86.46m.



Neeraj Chopra PHOTO: PTI

The top three led the seven-man field in the same order for the whole competition.

Peters will collect a Diamond League trophy and USD 30,000 for emerging as the DL champion this season.

Chopra will pocket USD 12,000 for his second-place finish in the grand finale which marked the end of the prestigious Diamond League series after 14 legs, as well as the end of the international athletics season. —*PTI*

Kush Maini survives scary crash in Baku

BAKU, 15 SEPT

Indian driver Kush Maini on Sunday survived a horrifying crash after he stalled at the start of a feature race in Formula 2, a support race to Formula 1.

The scary incident occurred on the opening lap of the Formula 2 race which preceded the Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix. The 23-year-old Indian had nowhere to go at the race start as the engine of his car stopped working suddenly. That left fellow drivers Josep Maria Marti and Oliver Goethe unsighted, leading to a massive collision.

The rear of Maini's car was destroyed by the impact of the crash and fortunately, he came out of it unscathed.

Maini's father Gautam confirmed to PTI that his son was doing fine. "He is doing okay. As part of the standard protocol all medical checkups were conducted on Kush. —*PTI*

ACT HOCKEY SEMIFINAL

In-form India favourites against Korea

HULUNBUIR, 15 SEPT

Maintaining a clean slate, favourites India will fancy their chances when they take on a below-par but unpredictable Korea in the semifinals of the Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Monday.

Paris Olympics bronze medallist India has been in rollicking form in the tournament so far, registering five wins out of five league matches. The Harmanpreet Singh-led side started their campaign with a 3-0 win over hosts China and then trounced Japan and Malaysia 5-1 and 8-1 respectively.

India then beat Korea 3-1 before eking out a narrow 2-1 win over arch-rivals Pakistan.

It has been a commanding performance from the Indians as they excelled in every department be it forward line, midfield or defence.

Scoring field goals was a major concern in Paris but here the young forward line comprising Sukhjeet Singh, Abhishek, Uttam Singh, Gurjot Singh, Araijeet Singh Hundal and others have exceeded expectations.

Unbeaten India will look to continue the winning run and supremacy over Korea PHOTO: PTI

Young midfielder Raj Kumar Pal, too, has shone bright, scoring some fine field goals. Besides, veteran Manpreet Singh, vice-captain Vivek Sagar Prasad and Nilakanta Sharma have excelled in the midfield. The Indian defence too has performed stoutly, conceding just four goals with goalkeepers Krishan Bahadur Pathak and Suraj Karkera not letting the team feel the void left by the retirement of the talismanic PR Sreejesh.

Harmanpreet, one of the best drag flickers in the world currently, has led from the front and has continued his good form of Paris, converting as many as five penalty corners.

When India struggled for field goals, Harmanpreet stood up with his penalty corner conversions.

Harmanpreet also has an able understudy in young Jugraj Singh, who is right now the fastest drag-flicker in the world.

—*PTI*

PSPB wins

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) edged out the Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) in a thrilling shootout to win the 4th Hockey India Senior Men Inter-Department National Championship title here on Sunday. Services secured third place by defeating FCI 4-0 at the Major Dhyanchand Hockey Stadium in Pimpri. In a nail-biting finale, the two teams were locked in a fierce contest that ultimately had to be decided by penalties.

—*PTI*

FIFA COACH CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP TO BE HELD AT AIFF

NEW DELHI, 15 SEPT

The FIFA coach capacity building workshop, a vital component of the world football governing body's Women's League Development, which falls under the broader FIFA Women's Development Programme, will be held at the AIFF National Centre of Excellence (NCE) in Kolkata from 16 to 18 September.

The workshop will be conducted by FIFA experts Simon Toselli and Stéphanie Spielmann.

Toselli, a FIFA women's football technical expert, had previously conducted the women's football strategy workshop in New Delhi in June this year. He has been collaborating with 25 countries on different projects and implementation of strategies (AFC, OFC, CAF and UEFA).

Spielmann, a former player, is a UEFA A-License coach and a FIFA and OFC instructor. She has been part of the FIFA coach mentorship programme with the Belgium women's national team.

She has coached the senior, U19 and U16 women's teams of Tahiti and has also been the women's football development officer in the island nation.

PHOTO: PTI

The FIFA coach capacity building workshop will be attended by coaches from the Indian women's national teams, IWL, IWL 2 clubs, and various other stakeholders.

The event will feature theoretical sessions in the mornings, practical field sessions in the afternoons, and dedicated one-on-one breakout sessions for personalised interaction with the experts, allowing coaches to address specific questions and concerns.

. —*PTI*